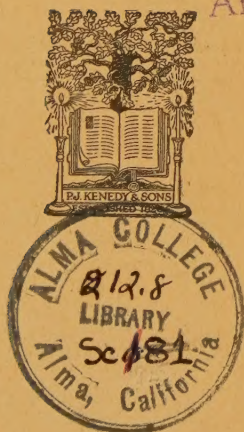


CHRIST'S OWN CHURCH

BY

MARTIN J. SCOTT, S.J., LITT. D.

ALMA COLLEGE
Alma, Calif.



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PREFACE

IT is a historical fact that Christ established a church and that He declared that it would endure to the end of the world. Christ proclaimed that He was God. As truly as He is God, so truly is His Church now in the world. The Church of Christ being a divine institution is the light of the world, as was Christ Himself. We know that the Church established by Christ is in the world and that like Him she is *the way, the truth and the life*. She is the way to true welfare here and hereafter; her teaching is the truth about man's relationship with his Maker; and she nourishes her children unto participation in the very life of God.

The Church established by Christ continues His ministry to mankind. He did not leave us orphans. He said of His Church: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (Jn. xx, 21); "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Lk. x, 16). Moreover, He declared that He would abide with her unto the end of time: "And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Mt. xxviii, 20). Christ's Church, which speaks with the certainty and authority of God in matters of Faith, is in the world today, an infallible guide to right living here and eternal welfare hereafter. She has the answer to all the problems which concern man's origin and

destiny. The world is agitated by various theories concerning man and his place in the scheme of things. Christ's Church gives God's answer to these problems. It is worth while, therefore, inquiring into which of the various churches that claim to be Christ's is His very own.

It is with a view of aiding those who are open to conviction and seriously seek after the truth that this volume is presented to the reader. Christ came to give peace on earth to those of good-will. His Church has the same mission. Although Christ's kingdom is not of this world, it nevertheless gives to the faithful that peace of soul which is a foretaste of the everlasting blessedness He has prepared for them that love Him.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH; AND IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD; WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY, SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED; DIED, AND WAS BURIED. HE DESCENDED INTO HELL; THE THIRD DAY HE AROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD: HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY; FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD. I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST, THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.

CHRIST'S OWN CHURCH

CHAPTER I

CHRIST'S OWN CHURCH

MOST people, if they believed that Christ was God and that He established a Church, would be members of that Church. Some people do not believe that Christ is God. Others who believe He is God do not believe that He founded a Church in the sense of a visible, organized institution. These persons maintain that Christ's Church is not so much an institution as a spiritual ideal and inspiration. Nearly all differences regarding religion arise from conflicting views of what Christ is and what His Church is.

There are some things on which mankind finds it hard to come to agreement. Difference of environment, education and character make it exceedingly difficult at times for men to agree on some of the major matters of life. Questions which concern nationality, race, family, and other such things are mostly settled by not being settled at all. Preconceived notions or personal interests blind people to evidence and make them deaf to logic. Even in business affairs, when there arises a misunderstanding between persons or parties it is next to impossible to come to an agreement. Hence for the adjustment of disputes between contending persons our civil courts are instituted. When persons appeal to the

courts the presiding judge often finds it hard to decide a case because of conflicting testimony. Not that either party deliberately falsifies, but each side seeing the matter at issue from its own viewpoint presents evidence accordingly. In proportion as people are vitally interested do they become swayed by passion. If one's financial ruin be threatened one ordinarily becomes keenly partisan to everything that affects such a momentous issue. In disputes concerning family misunderstandings it is well known that what is the plain and evident solution to those outside, who see the matter impartially, often remains a matter of irreconcilable difference to the interested parties.

It is so also with regard to international differences. In every such affair outside nations can see much better on which side the right rests. If there were a tribunal to settle international disputes as there is to adjudicate personal misunderstandings there would be no wars.

The very fact that people go to law over a matter is evidence that personal interest prevents the parties involved from seeing things as they are. Both parties to a court action will make conflicting statements and frequently in good faith. That is why a judge presides. The judge weighs the evidence, sifts the testimony and in various ways endeavors to arrive at the facts in the case. For that reason also a witness is cross-questioned.

If in matters concerning family or finance it is so hard to exclude passion from influencing judgment, how much harder must it be in matters of larger import—such as those concerning nationality, race or

creed? In an international dispute people almost invariably allow their judgment to be swayed by nationality. That is why nearly all the people of a nation at war believe the opposing nation to be at fault. And the opposing nation as a body, in the same way, believes that the other nation is the guilty party. Where nation or race is concerned the effect of partiality is only too noticeable. Racial prejudice is proverbial. It makes people excuse faults and exaggerate virtues of the race.

We should not be surprised, therefore, that prejudice and passion should influence judgment when there is question of creed. Religion touches people more deeply than anything else in life—that is, if one's religion means anything. History attests that religious issues have impelled people to greater sacrifices and to more intense agitation than anything else in the whole range of human affairs. In a matter of such extreme concern to man as religion we should not be surprised, therefore, to find passion and prejudice playing no little part.

In point of fact passion and prejudice played such an important part with regard to Jesus Christ Himself that the Founder of Christianity was rejected by His own people. The Gentiles, or outside nations, recognized His divine authority although His own people failed to do so. Christ was rejected by His own because of His people's preconceived and unfounded notion of what the Messiah was to be. They confounded the prophecies of His second glorious coming with those of His first appearance in lowliness, and because of this confusion refused to see the clear evidence of His claims which He so abun-

dantly presented. Hence it was that Christ said to them that having eyes they saw not and having ears they heard not (Mt. xiii, 13) (Mk. viii, 18).

In their case the wish was father to the thought. They were looking for a political and conquering Messiah. They did not wish to accept the meek and humble Christ as the Messiah, so they forced themselves to believe that He was not the Promised One. We see examples of this every day when persons who are at issue over a matter refuse to see the plain facts of the case. It requires, accordingly, an arbiter or judge to decide between them. In matters of religion, one's environment and education give a coloring to one's views which at times makes it very hard to see things in their true light.

With regard to Christ and His Church, it should not be difficult to know the truth if those inquiring be willing to consider the subject with a moderate degree of fairness. Both Christ and His Church are subjects belonging to history. Truth concerning them may be ascertained just as it may be ascertained concerning any other person or matter of history. Christ does not belong to the period of myths, but to the most critical historical era of mankind. It was the period called the Golden Age of Literature in which the greatest orators, poets and historians flourished. We have as abundant data concerning Christ and His Church as we have regarding Cæsar, Cicero or any other historical personage.

If Christ were merely a historic character, mankind would find it as easy to agree about Him as they do about Cæsar, Alexander or Charlemagne. But Christ is either more than a historic character

or nothing at all—rather, He is the greatest fraud in the annals of mankind if He be not God. If He be accepted it must be as a divine person or not at all. Acceptance of Him means acceptance of His code of morals, and that is what colors judgment about Him. If He be divine it is clear that His law of life is true and right. If He be divine it means that to defy or violate His law is to fly in the face of Omnipotence.

Hence because His law is austere and commands man to control his passions rather than to indulge them at will, human nature is very reluctant to yield submission to His claims. This reluctance causes some people to judge Christ and His Church differently from everything else. Aversion to the lofty ideals of Christ makes them blind to evidence in favor of His claims which they would readily admit in the case of other matters.

This attitude of mind is no new thing, nor peculiar to modern sceptics. The Jews showed this attitude towards Christ Himself. They not only refused to accept evidence, but moreover sought to destroy the evidence. This shows how far the wish not to believe will carry people. It may be well to give an instance of this attempt to destroy evidence, in order that we may see how this mental attitude affected judgment.

Christ had frequently and positively and unmistakably declared that He was God in the true sense—namely, that He was Jehovah. It was a most astounding claim to make. Christ realized it. Hence He substantiated His claims by deeds which could be performed by divine power only. Time and again

when the Jews showed resentment at His divine claims, Christ said: "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works" (Jn. x, 37, 38). He realized the magnitude of His divine claims and accordingly furnished evidence for them. And this evidence, because of the hostile attitude of the Jews, they not only refused to accept, but even went so far as to attempt to destroy. Let us give proof for this assertion.

The greatest miracle which Christ performed during His public ministry was the resurrection of Lazarus. It was after this wondrous manifestation of divine power that the people as a whole proclaimed Him the Messiah. They came out in thousands to greet Him as He journeyed from Bethany to Jerusalem. They waved palms, acclaiming Him with *hosannas*, and in every way showing faith in Him. The Jewish leaders had the same evidence for belief in Christ as had the multitude, but instead of converting them it hardened them, because they did not want evidence which did not confirm their own views and plans. Hence they called a meeting of the Council, and, admitting the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, decreed to kill Lazarus—the living evidence of Christ's power and the visible proof of His divine claims. The very evidence which convinced the multitude drove the leaders to plot the dreadful crime of murder.

"Many therefore of the Jews, who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went to the Pharisees, and told them the things that Jesus had done. The chief priests

therefore, and the Pharisees, gathered a council, and said: What do we, for this man doth many miracles? If we let Him alone so, all will believe in Him. . . . From that day therefore they devised to put Him to death. . . . But the chief priests thought to kill Lazarus also: because many of the Jews, by reason of him, went away, and believed in Jesus. And on the next day, a great multitude that was come to the festival day, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried: Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel. . . . The multitude therefore gave testimony, which was with Him, when He called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead. For which reason also the people came to meet Him, because they heard that He had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves: Do you see that we prevail nothing? behold, the whole world is gone after Him" (Jn. xi, 45-56; xii, 1-19).

The miracle that convinced the plain unprejudiced people, only perverted the proud and predetermined Pharisees.

When Jesus, on the Cross, prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Lk. xxiii, 34), He had in mind the multitude. The Pharisees knew what they were doing when they deliberately planned to destroy evidence and to commit murder. Sometimes we allow pity to plead for the Jews and endeavor to excuse them for the judicial murder of Jesus. But however much we may excuse the people at large, the Pharisees and other leaders stand convicted of bad faith. It was by reason of this perversion that eventually, by malicious propaganda, they succeeded in turning the multitude against Christ and forcing them to cry: "Crucify Him, crucify Him" (Lk. xxiii, 21).

Legal authorities affirm that destruction of evidence is the greatest crime against justice. It brands those guilty of it as deliberate and conscious criminals. It proves them to be committed knowingly to an evil course. This precisely was the case with those who falsely accused Christ, and did all in their power to discredit Him before the people. Whether or not they knew He was divine, they certainly knew that He was virtuous, and that it was wrong to make false charges against Him and deliberately to plot to kill Him. This shows how far prejudice and passion may carry their victims.

Many who are quick to condemn the Scribes and Pharisees for their bigoted attitude toward Christ, fail to realize that they may be similarly guilty towards His Church. His Church is as much misrepresented as was He Himself. She is not surprised nor alarmed at this because He foretold it. As He was falsely accused, so is she. Indeed one of the marks of the Church of Christ is her resemblance in this respect to her Founder. Christ distinctly foretold that His Church would meet with the same treatment from the world that He Himself had experienced.

They, therefore, who are looking for the Church of Christ must not be blinded as were the Scribes and Pharisees in the case of Christ. As we look back into that period we can readily observe their bigotry and their bad faith. Passion closed their eyes to what they did not want to see. They wanted a glorious king who would give them worldly power and riches: but Christ's kingdom was not of this world. They wanted material splendor: Christ came to give

them spiritual treasure. Hence they sought, by every possible device, to discredit Him and His mission.

It is so with His Church today. The world does all in its power to misrepresent her and to destroy her. But because He is with her she continues on and ever grows stronger, in spite of the hostility of the forces arrayed against her. But although the opposition of the world cannot destroy the Church, it can nevertheless so calumniate her that many—even among sincere searchers after truth—may echo with regard to her, what the Jews said of Christ: "Can anything of good come from Nazareth?" (Jn. i, 46).

St. Augustine said that malicious propaganda caused the rejection and death of Christ. It may be said that this same propaganda keeps many earnest seekers after truth from entering His Church. There are many people who crave the spiritual aids which Christ gives through His Church, but they are kept out of that Church because it has been so maligned and caricatured that they look for Him everywhere except where He is to be found. Christ is in some Church, that is clear. He said He would be with His Church forever. Which is His Church? Among Christians there are various churches each claiming to be Christ's. Which is His?

It is the purpose of this volume to show which is Christ's Church and what she teaches. But if the inquirer for the true Church does not approach the matter with unprejudiced mind he will not find her. She is as truly divine as her Founder. She has, like Him, the marks of divinity. But as He was rejected

by the Jews because of their pride and prejudice, so may His Church be rejected.

Christ was the Light of the World (Jn. viii, 12), yet they that were looking for the Light chose to remain in darkness rather than follow in the path which He illumined. Christ was rejected because He did not give what the world of His day clamored for. He did not come to give possessions nor power nor anything else attainable by human effort. He came to give what God alone could give. He came to give eternal life, a participation in His own divine life. "To as many as received Him, He gave the power to become the sons of God" (Jn. i, 12).

The Jewish leaders wanted temporal sovereignty, but Christ came to give them an eternal kingdom. "I am come," He said, "that they may have life" (Jn. x, 10). He was speaking not of this life which His hearers already had, but of real life—everlasting life. This present life is rather a living death than life. We begin to die as soon as we are born. Hardly do we draw our first breath when doctor and nurse are called in to ward off disease, accident and death. Every day finds us that much closer to the grave, which eventually claims the longest life.

However, the grave is not the goal but the starting point of man. Life is probation, and Christ came in order to teach us how to make use of it in a way that would issue into eternal life. It was for this that Christ came; everything else was secondary. They who appraise religion by the prosperity it brings, or by the distinction it confers, or by any worldly advantage it gives, have a wrong idea of the religion of Jesus Christ, who said: "What shall it profit a

man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?" (Mk. viii, 36). On another occasion, He said: "He that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it" (Mt. x, 39). And again: "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mk. viii, 37).

All this shows clearly what Christ came for, and what His Church was established for. Yet, in spite of this, there are not a few who judge of the truth of religion by the worldly return it gives. The martyrs did not thus value it. Those who suffered confiscation of property, imprisonment or exile for the Faith did not thus value it.

Christ came to give what human nature could not of itself attain. He placed in the reach of mankind the means of obtaining participation in the very life of God. The Son of God became man in order that the children of men might become the children of God. That is the meaning of Christ's mission and the motive for the establishment of His Church.

Nowadays not a few people believe that the purpose of religion is to make man healthier or more æsthetic or more distinguished. That was not Christ's view of religion. The Apostles were not prosperous, nor were they cultured by the standard of the world of their day. They did not set a high value on comfort nor health nor life itself. Every one of the twelve suffered excruciating torments in the cause of religion. Prosperity, honor, health and culture are most desirable, but they are not religion nor the fruits of religion. A man may be a saint and yet be poor or ill or without honor.

It is true that ordinarily the practice of Christ's religion will aid greatly in the attainment of every-

thing that is good for man. Most of the evil and misfortune in the world is caused directly or indirectly by the violation of God's law. Where the precepts of Christ are observed by the people as a body, you will find peace and welfare. The religion of Jesus Christ tends to make man cultured by its precept of self-denial, healthy by its precept of temperance, honorable by its precept of integrity, long-lived by its precept of virtue, and prosperous by its precept of justice. However, it may and often does happen that a good Christian or a good Christian community experiences the heavy hand of misfortune or sorrow.

God wants us to serve Him not as for wages but because He is our Sovereign Lord. He may or may not reward faithful service in this life. That is His affair. But one reward He does give His true followers and that is peace—the peace which comes from knowing that we are doing something worth while, and that we are friends of God, who—in His own time and way—will show us that He cannot be outdone in generosity.

God wants us to serve Him in faith, trusting in Him and His promises. God has all eternity to justify His dealing with mankind. That is why He does not have to show His favor nor disfavor here and now. Man has only the present to act in, and must accordingly justify himself before the world now or not at all. Hence human justice demands present satisfaction, but divine justice can afford to wait God's own time and manner.

Religion has for its purpose to direct and help us so to live that our lives may meet with the approval

of the Creator and Ruler and Judge of the World. It was for this that Christ came; it was for this that His earthly mission was undertaken; it was for this that He established His Church. "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (Jn. xx, 21). "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Mt. xxviii, 18-20).

Christ, in speaking thus, was addressing the Apostles in their official capacity as ministers of His Church. He said He would be with them all days to the end of the world. All of them passed to their heavenly reward within a few years. And yet the preaching of His doctrine was to go on to the end of the world, and He was to be with His teachers forever, as He solemnly promised. He did not come merely for the people of His own time or nation, nor did He establish His Church merely for the world of His day, but for all peoples and for all time. This Church was to be a visible Church since it was to have ministers who were to baptize and to preach.

There is therefore in the world today the visible Church of Christ baptizing and teaching by His authority and with His guarantee of perpetuity and infallibility. Christ guaranteed His divine presence with the Church He founded. Error is impossible in the Church with which Christ dwells. Christ's Church must be as true as Himself. It is the continuation of His ministry. It is Himself vicariously

in the world. Jesus said to Peter: "Thou art Peter [a rock]; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. xvi, 18). Again, speaking of His Church, He said: "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Lk. x, 16).

Christ's Church, therefore, speaks with His authority and with His infallibility. There is but one Church in the world that even claims to speak with the authority and infallibility of Christ. Every Church except one admits that it is fallible. The main opposition to the true Church of Christ is her claim to infallibility. But no Church that is fallible can be the Church of the infallible Christ. Every other Church by the very fact that it admits liability to error proclaims that it is not the Church of Christ. If a Church may err we have no guarantee that it is a true guide. We may never know when its teaching is true or false. There can be no authority with uncertainty of belief.

A Church which is Christ's must be as authoritative and as true as Himself in matters pertaining to her divine commission. As teacher of truth and as guardian of morality she must be as right as Christ Himself. A wavering Church cannot be Christ's Church. A Church that is seeking after truth cannot be Christ's Church. His Church has the truth. A Church that changes cannot be Christ's Church, because truth never changes. Christ left a Deposit of Truth with His Church and that truth will never admit of change. The multiplication table was true in the beginning, is true now, and will be true always. It is no reflection on it to say that it does not change.

Only error changes. In its effort to rectify itself error must change; but truth never.

Hence the Church of Christ is an authoritative, infallible and doctrinally unchangeable Church. There is but one such Church in the world—the Catholic Church. If the earnest inquirer after religious truth will examine impartially and without prejudice, he will find that it is as evident that the Catholic Church is Christ's own Church as it is that Christ is God.

CHAPTER II

THE CONSTITUTION OF CHRIST'S OWN CHURCH

WHEN the American Colonies decided to establish a new and independent State in the New World, they drew up a document setting forth the purpose and policy of the new government. This document they named *The Constitution of the United States of America*. It proclaimed the United States of America a perfect society—a government owing allegiance to no power on earth. It established legislative, executive and judicial powers which were to guide and to govern the people who were to be its subjects.

Christ's own Church is a perfect society. Like the perfect state, it is sovereign and independent—in its own sphere—owing its origin and powers to no earthly monarch or government. Christ's own Church has her Constitution as has the state. The constitution of a worldly state is man-made. The framers of the Constitution of the United States were delegated by the respective colonies to represent them in the making of the Constitution. But Christ's own Church received her Constitution from God.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, proclaimed that He came on earth to establish a kingdom. He declared

that His kingdom, although in the world, was not of the world. This kingdom He called His Church. Having proclaimed that all power was His in heaven and earth, He established a society or kingdom which was to continue His mission to mankind to the end of the world. Jesus, having chosen the Apostles as the foundation stones of His Church, of which He Himself was the cornerstone, commissioned them as follows: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Mt. xxviii, 18-20). In order that it might be evident that this commission was divine, Jesus solemnly declared to them: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (Jn. xx, 21). By this delegation Christ conferred upon His representatives the greatest power ever bestowed upon man.

In establishing the kingdom of God on earth Christ endowed it with legislative, executive and judicial powers which had for their purpose to aid and to guide mankind to the kingdom of God in heaven. These powers which He conferred on His Church are divine and they entitle her to speak in His name, to legislate in His name and to govern in His name. This is what constitutes Christ's own Church a divine institution, truly the kingdom of God on earth, whose subjects are destined to become the children of God in the heavenly kingdom.

The Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament

were the preparation for the New Dispensation, inaugurated by the Son of God become man.

Immediately before the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, it was insistently predicted and ardently preached by the herald of Christianity—John the Baptist.

Directly after the Baptist, Christ Himself came announcing the kingdom—"And after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying: The time is accomplished, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel" (Mk. i, 14-15). Christ here identified *the kingdom* with *the Gospel*. It was the *good news* to mankind proclaiming that the Son of God became man in order that man might become a partaker of the divine nature. "To as many as received Him, He gave them the power to become the sons of God" (Jn. i, 12).

Christ established His kingdom on earth in order to rear the children of men to become the children of God. God's kingdom on earth has for its purpose to bring mankind to God's kingdom in heaven. The Church which Christ founded is the kingdom of God on earth. The Church is the society of those who believe in Christ as the Son of God, and whose members obey—as they would obey Christ Himself—the authority He has established in His Church.

Christ spent much of His public life laying the foundation of His Church. Having selected special associates, called Apostles, He instructed them in the principles and government of the kingdom, and organized them into a teaching and ruling body. As every human or earthly organization must have

a visible head, the divine Founder made one of these Apostles the chief visible ruler of the kingdom, appointing Simon—whose name He changed to Peter—His first Vicar. In changing the name of Simon to that of Peter, Christ had a special object in mind. *Peter*, in the language which was then spoken in Palestine, means *rock*. It was because Christ was to make Simon the foundation of His Church that He gave him this name. "To Simon He gave the name Peter" (Mk. iii, 16).

On Peter, as the rock foundation, Christ founded the Church which was to be in the world for all time exercising an authority extending even to the life beyond. "I say to thee: that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. . . . And whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Mt. xvi, 18-19).

During His public ministry Jesus instructed His Apostles in the truths and principles which were to form the Constitution of His Church. Up to the time of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, the instructions of Christ to His Apostles were but little comprehended. But Christ had promised them that in due time the Holy Spirit would be sent them to recall to their minds all that He had taught them, and furthermore to enlighten them on what pertained to the further establishment and government of the Church whose foundation He Himself had laid. In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we read that Jesus "showed Himself alive after His passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing

to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God" (Acts i, 3). It was during these conversations, doubtless, that Jesus revealed to His Apostles much of the Constitution of His Church.

When we consider that, on the one hand, the Constitution of Christ's own Church is the most perfect ever framed on this earth, and that, on the other hand, the Apostles were of themselves very ordinary men, of no political or governmental experience, it is evident that God—not man—inspired the Constitution of Christ's Church. The greatest statesmen have marveled at the simplicity and efficacy of the government of the world-wide Catholic Church. A group of more or less illiterate peasants never could have devised the government which rules so effectively over an organization embracing every race and nation throughout the world.

And what is the Constitution of the kingdom of God on earth—Christ's own Church? Its articles may be summed up under three dominant heads. (1) That Christ is God. (2) That Christ established a Church to continue until the end of the world the mission which He inaugurated. And, (3) that Christ delegated to this Church the power of teaching, of legislating, and of governing in His name. It is the third point that particularly concerns us. All Christians believe that Christ is God, and that He established a Church. But the Catholic Church, alone, holds that her doctrine alone is Christ's, and that her legislation alone has divine sanction, and that she alone rules with God's authority when governing her subjects.

To His own Church Christ guaranteed that she

should be divinely safeguarded against error—"I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever. The Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him: but you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you" (Jn. xiv, 16-17). Again Our Lord said to His Apostles: "But when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth" (Jn. xvi, 13). The abiding presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church is incompatible with error. Moreover to Peter, whom He appointed head of the Church, Christ solemnly declared: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Lk. xxii, 32).

In giving the Apostles their commission to teach His doctrine to all mankind, Jesus added: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Mt. xxviii, 20). By these words Christ manifested that He was addressing the Apostles in their official capacity. As individuals they were all to pass away soon, but their office of teachers was to continue in their successors to the end of time. Jesus therefore declared that He would be with His teaching Church forever. Christ cannot dwell with error. His Church consequently is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. iii, 15). This is a fundamental article of the Constitution of Christ's own Church.

Another basic article of this Constitution is that Christ's own Church legislates with divine authority. Christ said to His Church: "He that heareth you,

heareth Me" (Lk. x, 16). Again He proclaimed: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (Jn. xx, 21). It was because the Church spoke in God's name that the first proclamation of the Apostles began with the words "For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (Acts xv, 28).

A further distinct article of the Church's Constitution is that her executive power has the sanction of God Himself. Jesus said of His Church, speaking to Peter, her visible head: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Mt. xvi, 19). By this declaration Christ made the Church a governing body, whose authority has divine sanction.

St. Peter makes it clear that this power was exercised in the very beginning of Christianity. Writing to those whom he had placed in charge of the faithful, he says: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking care of it, not by constraint, but willingly, according to God" (I Pet. v, 2).

St. Paul declares that in the ministry the prelates represent Christ Himself: "For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us. For Christ, we beseech you, be reconciled to God" (II Cor. v, 20). "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. iv, 1). Again the same Apostle says: "You received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus" (Gal. iv, 14). In thus speaking he was echoing the words of Christ Himself: "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me" (Mt. x, 40).

From these articles of the Constitution of Christ's own Church it is evident that she is the voice of God on earth. Until time is no more she will speak as His official ambassador to mankind. As our government is back of her ambassador, so is God Almighty back of His Church—His divinely constituted ambassador to mankind. Catholics cherish the Constitution of their Church—of Christ's own Church—and will uphold it even by the sacrifice of their lives, if necessary. It is the divine charter which gives them the liberty of the children of God, and confers on them, eventually, membership in the divine family in the kingdom of God in heaven. This explains the heroism and devotion of Catholics to their Church.

Citizens of the United States cherish the Constitution of the United States, and safeguard it as the guarantee of their property, liberty and life. The Constitution of Christ's own Church is the solemn assurance of God Almighty that He Himself is teaching, guiding and governing those who entrust themselves to His divinely established Church. Under this divine guidance the children of men may become the children of God in that blessed home which He has prepared for them that believe Him, trust Him and love Him.

CHAPTER III

PAPAL INFALLIBILITY

INFALLIBILITY is not impeccability. Infallibility does not mean immunity from sin, but from error. A judge may not be a virtuous man, yet his legal decisions may be wise and true. As men, the Popes have been the holiest official line of men in history. In fact most of the Popes have led lives of exalted sanctity, many of them being canonized saints. But sanctity has really nothing to do with infallibility. Christ did not guarantee infallibility to a good Pope only, but to the Pope—the visible head of that Church of which Christ Himself is the invisible Head.

The Pope is the Vicar of Christ. *Vicar* means *one who stands in the place of another or for another*.

If Christ thought it worth while to establish a Church, which was to speak in His name and with His authority, He would certainly see to it that she should not lead men astray. That His Church—which He commanded that we should hear as we should hear Himself—should teach what was false, would mean either that Christ could not preserve her from error, or else that He would not.

Christ, being God, is able to preserve His Church from error. Christ, being Truth, has willed that His Church should not teach error. If Christ, having the

power, did not will to preserve His Church from error, it would mean that He was indifferent to truth, which is an impossibility with God. Moreover, after commanding us to hear His Church as we should hear Himself, He would be accountable for the consequences of false teaching if He permitted His Church to err. All this is independent of Scriptural and historical evidence in the matter of infallibility.

Scriptural evidence attests that Christ guaranteed His Church against error in faith and morals. Scriptural evidence also attests that He guaranteed the Pope, the visible head of the Church, against error, as religious teacher of the faithful. That Christ endowed His Church with infallibility is clear from His commission to the Apostles: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Mt. xxviii, 18-20).

Here it is to be noted that Christ said He was to be with His Church unto the consummation of the world. Hence He was speaking to the Apostles in their official capacity. Personally, they were all to pass from this earth within a short time, but officially they—in their successors—were to continue forever. Consequently Christ's promise that He should be with them forever, meant that He was to be with His Church forever.

As Christ is Truth, the Church wherein He resides cannot teach error. Hence St. Paul speaks of the

Church as "The house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. iii, 15). And he speaks of the teaching of the Church as the teaching of God Himself: "When you had received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed) the word of God, who worketh in you that have believed." (I Thess. ii, 13).

That God speaks in and by the teaching Church was asserted by the very first proclamation of the Apostles in the decree of the Council of Jerusalem: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no further burden upon you" (Acts xv, 28). Here the Apostles refer to the Holy Ghost as abiding with the Church and directing her. This is in accordance with Christ's assurance of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in His Church, as indicated by His prayer at the Last Supper: "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever. The Spirit of Truth . . . He shall abide with you, and shall be in you. . . . The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you" (Jn. xiv, 16-26).

Later, Christ, referring to this same indwelling of the Spirit of Truth in His Church, said: "But when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth" (Jn. xvi, 13). The Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles on Pentecost day and has been with the Church ever since, and will be to the end of time, on the word of Christ, who is Truth itself. The infallibility of the Church as a Church,

might be established by further proof, but what has been given is sufficient for any mind that is open to conviction.

We now approach the matter of Papal Infallibility. All that has been adduced for the infallibility of the Church applies, more or less, to the infallibility of her visible head. The Church being a visible body cannot be herself infallible if her visible head be fallible. It is easier for Almighty God to guarantee infallibility to an individual than to a whole organization—rather, there can be no question of *easy* or *easier* with God, since He can do all things. But speaking humanly, personal infallibility is an easier matter than Church infallibility. It is all a question of power and of purpose.

Christ had the power and He declared also His purpose of endowing the visible head of His Church with infallibility. Christ said to Peter: "Thou art Peter [a rock]; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. xvi, 18). Here Christ proclaims Peter the foundation of His Church. An infallible Church cannot rest on a fallible foundation. The superstructure does not give stability to the foundation but gets its stability from the foundation. If Peter, the rock, the foundation of the Church, should not be sound in Faith, the whole edifice would totter.

Again Christ said to Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Lk. xxii, 31-32). The prayer of Christ cannot fail. This prayer was for Peter as

visible head of the Church. It was for Peter in his official capacity, and consequently for the visible head of the Church for all time. To Peter alone was confided the office of Chief Pastor of the flock of Christ. He was bidden to feed not only lambs but also the sheep. "Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. . . . Feed My sheep" (Jn. xxi, 15-17).

As Chief Pastor, the visible head of the infallible Church could not feed her members error. Therefore, as she was guaranteed infallibility by her divine Founder, her Chief Pastor was also guaranteed to nourish her by truth, not by error. The Chief Pastorate did not terminate but only began with Peter. Consequently, the Pope, Peter's successor, has the same commission as the first Chief Pastor—to feed the flock of Christ the doctrine of truth.

That the early Church so understood the matter is evident from the records of the first ages of Christianity. Clement's letter to the Corinthians at the end of the first century, and the epistle of Ignatius of Antioch to the Roman Church at about the same period, bear witness to this doctrine of the Church. In the second century the teaching of St. Irenaeus that conformity with Rome is a sufficient proof of true doctrine (Adv. Haer. III) attests the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. Even heretics recognized something special in the authoritative teaching of the Pope; for Marcion and Pelagius and Coelestius appealed to Rome against the decision of provincial bishops or synods. St. Augustine expressed the mind

of Christendom when he declared on receiving the decision of Pope Innocent with reference to the decrees of the Council of Carthage: "Rome's reply has come, the case is closed" (Serm. cxxxi, c. x).

Having established the fact of Papal Infallibility, it may not be out of place to explain the limits of this dogma. The Vatican Council has defined that

"The Roman Pontiff, when speaking *ex cathedra*—that is, when in the exercise of his office as pastor and teacher of all Christians—he defines, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by the whole Church, is, by reason of the divine assistance promised to him in Blessed Peter, possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer wished His Church to be endowed in defining doctrines of faith and morals; and consequently that such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of their own nature and not by reason of the Church's consent."

From this definition it is clear that Papal Infallibility has its limits. Everything written or spoken by the Pope is not infallible, but only what he proclaims on faith or morals as teacher of all the faithful. Not every statement that a judge makes is a judicial pronouncement, but only what he says in his official capacity. Not every paper written or signed by an official is an official document, but only those which are written in the due discharge of his official position. It is the same with the Pope. It is only when he speaks in virtue of his office of Chief Pastor of Christendom—the successor of St. Peter and visible head of the Church—that he is infallible. Furthermore, his infallibility extends only to faith and morals. He can make mistakes in poli-

tics, business, finance, and in many other things; but there is one thing he cannot err in, and that is in a pronouncement of faith or morals, which he makes as the Chief Pastor and Teacher of Christendom.

The Pope, therefore, is not infallible as a private person, nor in matters outside religious doctrine, nor when he addresses particular groups. He is infallible only when in his official position as visible head of the Church, he addresses, directly or indirectly, the faithful throughout the world, and then in matters of faith or morals only.

Even if Christ had not declared the infallibility of the Pope, it would follow as a necessary consequence from the nature of the religion which He established. Christ taught but one Faith. He prayed to His Father for the unity of the Church: "Keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one, as we also are" (Jn. xvii, 11). The unity of the Father and the Son is the most perfect conceivable, and this is the unity He willed to be in His Church. An infallible visible head is necessary for a body of believers, if unity is to exist among them. The best proof of this is to witness the sad state of disunion which characterizes every religious body outside the Catholic Church.

Papal Infallibility, when viewed with unbiassed mind, far from being a difficult proposition to accept, becomes really necessary for a religion which claims to be divine. Revealed religion—that is, the religion of Christ—is based altogether on divine intervention, presupposing the possibility of miracles and their actual occurrence. The Incarnation was a

miracle. The Resurrection was a miracle. The transformation of the Apostles, by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them at Pentecost, was a miracle. Likewise the preservation of the visible head of the Church from error in faith or morals is a miracle, in the sense that it is effected by supernatural power.

The same power which made Apostles out of the peasants of Galilee safeguards the Faith, not only in the Church, but also, and especially, in her visible head, the official successor of Peter. Peter was chosen and designated by the divine Founder of Christianity to be His first Vicar on earth. Christ clothed him with endowments worthy of his position. Christ did not establish His Church for the lifetime of Peter only, but for all time. The immunity from error which He guaranteed to Peter was transmitted to Peter's successor as visible head of the Church, and thence down to the present occupant of Peter's office.

None but a divine Church could lay claim to such a prerogative as infallibility. No human organization would dare affirm that it or its head would never fall into error. The very claim of Papal Infallibility is one of the most convincing proofs of the divine institution of the Catholic Church.

Even outside the Catholic Church, there are many who are in admiration of the Papacy and its wonderful benefits to mankind. Dr. Charles A. Briggs has paid the following glowing tribute to this hallowed institution:

"The Papacy is one of the greatest institutions that have ever existed in the world; it is much the greatest thing now existing, and looks forward with calm assurance to a still

greater future. Its dominion extends throughout the world over the only ecumenical Church. All other Churches are national or provincial in their organization. It reaches back in unbroken succession through more than eighteen centuries to St. Peter, appointed by the Saviour of the world to be the Primate of the Apostles." *

It is hard to understand how a scholar could make that statement and yet not become a Catholic.

Macaulay thus eulogizes the Papacy:

"The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin, the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The Republic of Venice came next in antiquity, but the Republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy, and the Republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains. The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigor." †

In conclusion, let us hear James Field Spalding, who for years was a Protestant Episcopal clergyman, but became a Catholic in 1892:

"It is the genuine authority which the Catholic Church proves herself to possess, set forth by thinkers like Saint Augustine among the ancients and Cardinal Newman among moderns, which makes such a strong appeal to me, when brought to consider my obligation to truth. . . .

"In now adding my atom of testimony to truth, I may possibly aid some who are weighing the matter, perhaps long-tossed upon the waters of unrest, still striving and struggling. No matter how many complications may arise

* *The Real and Ideal in the Papacy*: Briggs.

† Macaulay's *Essays*, on Ranke's *History of the Popes*.

in the minds of thinking people as they face the great question, 'What and where is the genuine religion of Jesus Christ?'—and there were never so many complications as today—more and more will it be found that but one organization in the world can satisfy, and but one conserves the essential idea of the Church, the Divine Institution, God's revelation speaking with His authority to men." *

* *The World's Unrest and Remedy*: Spalding.

CHAPTER IV

THE CREED OF CHRIST'S OWN CHURCH

THE Church which Christ founded teaches the truths which He committed to her. Christ's Church has not invented the truths of Revelation; she has received them from her divine Founder for transmission down the ages. There has been no revelation since the days of the Apostles. From time to time the Church has been called upon to clarify her Deposit of Faith, but these declarations no more constitute a new doctrine than does a decision of the United States Supreme Court constitute an addition to the Constitution of the United States.

Recently a rationalist remarked that if the Catholic Church would be more lenient about sex matters and about the doctrine of hell, everybody would want to be a Catholic, because it is a religion which appeals to all that is best in man. To this it may be replied that these doctrines affect Catholics, both clergy and people, as they do anybody else. Catholics accept them not because they choose them nor because they find them congenial, but on the authority of God Himself.

Catholics do not make their Creed, they accept it. This is the difference between the Catholic and every other Church. Other creeds are man-made or se-

lected. They are the result of man's choice or invention. Those who accept these man-made creeds do so because they find them to their liking. But the Catholic accepts his Creed not because its doctrine is to his liking nor because he has chosen its articles, but solely because Christ, the Son of God, has proclaimed it.

The Catholic employs his God-given reason to ascertain if Christ be God and if He has established a Church. Once convinced of this, reason dictates that the Creed of Christ's Church is the truth of God. Hence a Catholic believes his Creed not because it pleases him, but because God has declared it. This is the highest use of reason, for it is most reasonable to conclude that what God has imparted to His Church must be true.

We act in a similar manner in the ordinary affairs of life. Very few people understand how a medical prescription is compounded; but they know that a licensed pharmacist understands his profession and that in consequence it is reasonable to rely on the correctness of the prescription as filled. We observe the same procedure in the case of a physician whom we trust with our very lives, although we do not necessarily comprehend the nature of his remedies or treatment. Our whole lives are lived on faith, for the most part.

It is reasonable, therefore, to believe that God who gave us our reason will not require us to believe what is unreasonable. Hence, when He requires us—as a condition of salvation—to believe the truths He has revealed, we are certain that we are acting reasonably in accepting them. That is the

Catholic position. God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, has established a Church, and commissioned her to teach all things that He has commanded her. These truths constitute her Creed, and the Catholic accepts and believes that Creed as firmly as if God Himself in person declared it to him.

It is related of St. Louis of France that on a certain occasion a courtier rushed into the royal presence, exclaiming: "Sire, a great miracle in the Church! The Blessed Eucharist appears on the altar as the divine Child. Come, sire, and behold the wondrous sight." To which the king replied: "Let them go who do not believe. I believe more firmly than if I saw. My senses have often led me astray, but God's word can never mislead me." So spoke a philosopher, king and saint. It is the Catholic attitude precisely.

However, belief is one thing, and conduct another. Sad to say, a Catholic's creed and conduct are not always consistent; if they were Catholicity would indeed impress the world with its divine character. A non-Catholic, on a certain occasion, after hearing the Catholic Creed explained, said to me: "If I believed your Creed I'd be a better man than you. I don't see how you can believe what you do and not be a saint." And the truth is every Catholic should be a saint. But, of course, poor human nature keeps some of us down. That is why the good, considerate Christ established the Sacrament of Penance, to help us rise no matter how deplorably we may have fallen.

There is a vast difference between knowing and

doing. But seldom does a man rise higher than his standards. The Catholic Creed is the Catholic standard, and the nearer it is lived up to, the closer will a man be to what God wants him to be.

Some people affirm that it is not what you believe that matters, but what you do. But, ordinarily, people's deeds conform more or less to their beliefs. The anarchist believes it is right to assassinate, and so he kills. The cannibal believes it is right to eat human flesh, so he slaughters human captives to eat them. The burglar believes in taking the possessions of others, so he robs. It is the same all the way through. Some people affect to believe that it is all right to lie, so they lie. Not that liars are limited to those who believe that lying is lawful. But certainly, if one can persuade oneself that it is right to lie, one will be more apt to lie than if one believed that it was wrong to lie. And so of other things. Bolsheviks believe in the doctrine of free love, with the result that in Russia women are commonly degraded to the status of animals, and children are frequently made wards of the State. So creed does matter.

The Constitution of the United States is our political creed. It directs our policy and our conduct. Every concern has certain principles by which it conducts its business. These principles constitute a business creed or policy. Every organization, such as police, fire, the army, the navy, etc., has a code of principles and conduct which virtually constitutes a creed. A creed, in religion, is nothing more than a statement of the truths which constitute the guiding principles of its believers.

To say that it does not matter what we believe is equivalent to saying that the Constitution of the United States does not matter. We know that it matters so much that, to defend it, the Government would, if necessary, call on her citizens to uphold it even at the sacrifice of property and life. We look upon the Constitution as the charter of our rights and liberties. It influences our conduct as individuals and as a nation.

A religious creed, in the same way, or rather I should say in a higher way, influences the lives of its adherents. A man may live lower than his ideals, but hardly above them. Creed is the religious ideal, and the concrete expression of the truths and principles which influence and characterize conduct. Hence, the importance of creed in every religion, and the shallowness of those who assert that it is not what one believes that matters, but what one does. Doing ordinarily follows one's principles, and creed formulates principles.

There is a saying among philosophers that whatever we deliberately do is first in intention, but last in accomplishment. Before a contractor builds a house, he first has the purpose of building it, and the complete structure is the last or final act of the process. That is, the end in view gives meaning and direction to whatever leads up to the end. It is so with conduct, ordinarily. If a person sets before himself excellent standards, his conduct will tend to be correspondingly excellent. But if one's standards are low, one's conduct will be apt to conform to low standards.

Perhaps a few facts from actual experience will

illustrate the close connection between creed and conduct, and the consequent importance of creed. Recently, one of the high officials of a metropolitan fire department affirmed that among a certain class of people it could be known beforehand when fires were to be expected. If business was poor, fires were frequent. If business was good, fires rarely or never occurred. What is the significance of this fact? It means that these people believe that it is a clever thing to make money by cheating the insurance company. The morality of the matter does not seem to concern them. Their code of right and wrong is *not to be caught*. That is their business creed. Whatever they can do safely they regard as right to do. It may be objected that they know it is wrong since they try to avoid detection. But this only emphasizes their business principle which is that the only wrong is being found out. Their commercial creed tells them everything is legitimate in making money, and they act accordingly.

We may see another instance of the influence of creed in conduct in the matter of business failures. An upright man would suffer beggary rather than bring about a dishonest failure. Yet, there are some people who make a business of dishonest failures. Some merchants go into business with the intention of failing, and thus enriching themselves.

Our laws and regulations with regard to business failure and fire losses were enacted in order to protect people against utter ruin in case of misfortune from trade or the elements. When these laws, made in benevolence and charity, are utilized by unprincipled persons to work harm on others, it is evident

that a great injustice results in consequence of dishonest methods and principles. Merchants actuated by such a business creed not only take an unfair advantage of competitors and rob the insurance companies, but also inflict great loss on the community at large by causing higher insurance rates to fall on the public on account of the higher percentage of risks.

What has been said of business creed applies also to political creed, and to every department of human activity.

Creed shapes conduct, ordinarily. This is noticeably so with regard to personal or private life. There are persons who believe, or affect to believe, that sex indulgence is one's own affair, and that no restriction should be put upon it except what one's own gratification and cleverness dictate. It is clear that with such a sex creed a man is a menace to society. Yet, with not a few this is the moral code or creed. If a person's sex creed bids him do everything and anything, except what incurs undesirable consequences, he will not long remain on a level much higher than the animal. Clever people can avoid the temporal consequences of sex immorality just as they can those of business immorality, at least apparently, or, for a time. In the end, of course, the wages of sin is death, but at times the wages may be slow coming.

If a man's creed is right, even though he does not live up to it, it will, nevertheless, be a constant warning voice to him and, sooner or later, in most cases, cause him to desist from an evil course. But if a man has no creed, he is like a navigator without

compass or anchor, at the mercy of every wave of passion.

If creed were not important and essential, God would never have given it to mankind. The Ten Commandments are a creed. One reason why some people do not want to believe in God is because they do not want to live by that divine constitution of the Ten Commandments. They overlook the fact that before God gave the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, He wrote them on the heart of man by conscience. *Conscience* is God's code. It is the voice of the Creator telling His creature what He wants him to do—namely, to do good and to avoid evil. And because good and evil became obscured to man by reason of man's passions, God clarified and emphasized conscience by giving His Ten Commandments.

Finally, by the living voice of His own divine Son, Jesus Christ, He not only reaffirmed the Ten Commandments, but indicated a yet higher and more perfect service. Christ said: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Mt. xix, 17). This was His seal on the Decalogue. But He did not stop there. He knew that there were generous souls who were not satisfied with doing only what was obligatory, but who sought distinguished service in His ranks, and to such He said: "If thou wilt be perfect . . . come follow Me" (Mt. xix, 21).

Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill and perfect it (Mt. v, 17). With this end in view He established His Church. Christ never wrote a line, yet He commanded His Apostles to teach mankind all that He had communicated to them during

the years of His mission on earth. The teaching of Christ is the Creed of Christians. The Apostles committed some of Christ's teaching to writing, but not all of it. For many years after the Church was established and functioning there was not a line of the Gospels written.

The Bible, which is a collection of sacred and inspired books, was not compiled until several hundred years after the Church of Christ was in existence. The Church gave us the Bible. It was not, as some suppose, the Bible that made the Church. It was Christ that made the Church; and the Church, by the authority and divine guarantee given her by her Founder, assembled the volumes we call the Scripture or the Bible, and put her seal on them, proclaiming them to be inspired writings, and uniting them in one book, called eventually, *The Book* or *Bible*. The word *bible* is from the Greek word *biblion*, meaning book. By degrees the Scripture came to be called *The Book* or *Bible*. If there had never been a Bible, the Church would have existed just the same.

The original States of our Union were a nation before the Constitution was written. It was the national government which framed the Constitution, as an expression of the policy of the new nation. Once the Constitution was adopted it became the embodiment of the spirit of the nation, and a permanent expression of its purpose and character. So with the Bible. It was given to us as an inspired volume by the Church, but once having been given by the Church to the world as God's word, it serves the Church somewhat after the manner in which the

Constitution serves the United States. The Constitution of the United States is the charter and permanent record of what our country stands for. So the Bible, in a somewhat similar way, attests the truths of revealed religion and serves as a partial record of what the Church of Christ is and for what she stands.

The expression *partial record* is used advisedly. For the Bible by no means gives the complete history of Christ nor of His teaching. St. John plainly states this in the concluding lines of his Gospel: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did; which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written" (Jn. xxi, 25). St. Luke affirms the same thing when he tells us in the Acts of the Apostles that Jesus "showed Himself alive after His passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God" (Acts i, 3). Very little is recorded in the Bible of what Christ discoursed on during these forty days.

Indeed, very little is recorded in the Bible of His teaching during the three years of His public ministry. Yet, every day He spent much time preaching to the people and instructing His disciples on the truths of His kingdom, the future Church. The Gospels give only the barest outline of what Jesus said. But it must have been considerable, from the fact that Jesus promised the Apostles that when they received the Holy Ghost, they should recall all things which He had said to them (Jn. xiv, 26).

Only a very little part of what Christ did and

taught could be contained in the few pages of the Gospel narrative. The four Gospels taken all together make but a few pages, whereas no teacher that ever lived was so much occupied with instruction as was Christ. Hence St. John, in another place, states: "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing, you may have life in His name" (Jn. xx, 30, 31).

What Jesus taught the Apostles during the three years He instructed them forms what is called the *Deposit of Faith*. This means the body of doctrine which He entrusted to them and commanded them to teach all nations: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Mt. xxviii, 18-20). And again He said: "You shall give testimony, because you are with Me from the beginning" (Jn. xv, 27). Before a line of the Gospels was written, the Church had been firmly established and was teaching the truths which Christ had commanded. Some of the things which she taught are not even mentioned in the Gospels.

There is not a word in the Gospels about changing the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday. Up to the time of the establishment of the Church of Christ, the day of worship was *Saturday* which in Hebrew is *Sabbath*. The Christian day of worship is Sunday, not Saturday. We call Sunday the *Sabbath*

sometimes, because that was the established name for the day of worship in the Old Testament. To change the day of worship was a momentous thing for the new Church to do. Unless it was by the authority of God it would not and could not have been done. Yet, there is no special authorization for this change in Scripture. Those who affirm that the Bible is the sole rule of Faith, should leave off Sunday church-going and worship on the Sabbath, as the Jews do to this day, and as the Old Testament ordains.

None but God could authorize the abolition of an ordination made by God Himself. It was God who commanded: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day" (Exod. xx, 8). The Church of Christ abolished Sabbath worship because she had authorization from Him who proclaimed the Ten Commandments. Christ said of His Church: "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Lk. x, 16). That was a tremendous power for the Creator to delegate to a creature. But in giving the power Christ had also promised the dwelling of the Holy Ghost with His Church, which was to make it immune to error.

Not only did the Church institute Sunday as the day of special public worship, but she also abolished many other rites and ceremonies prescribed by the Old Testament. The Temple, with its high priest and sacrifices, instituted by divine command itself, were all superseded by the rites and ceremonies of Christianity. Yet in the Gospels there is no word to justify these great and fundamental changes, unless it be that word of Christ which made the Church His representative and clothed her with His power:

"He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Lk. x, 16). And that other: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (Jn. xx, 21).

At all events, the Church was a flourishing institution, with all her essential rites and ceremonies, before the Gospels were written. If the Gospels had never been written the Church would be just what she is.

Preceding and accompanying the Gospels, the Church had the body of teaching imparted to her by Christ, which we call the *Deposit of Faith*. This Deposit of Faith—some of it committed to writing in the early days, before the Gospels, some of it a living tradition in the beginning, but gradually taking permanent documentary form—we call tradition. *Tradition* means *that which is handed down*. In the Church, tradition means the teaching and practice committed to the Apostles by Christ or the Holy Ghost, which they handed down to their successors and which has reached down to the present time, and will continue until the end of time.

The basis of Catholic Faith is that Christ is God, and that His Church speaks in His name and with His authority. Unless this is believed, one is not a Catholic. If it is believed, one puts the same trust in the teaching Church as one would put in the living Christ. This gives Catholics that wonderful peace which comes from certainty. It gives them that heroism in sacrifice and conduct which comes from the realization that they are doing what God wants them to do.

Catholics believe that Christ meant what He said when He affirmed that "he that shall lose his life for

My sake, shall find it" (Mt. xvi, 25). Hence they do not hesitate to lay down life itself in His cause. When called on to profess their Faith in Christ they do not flinch, for they know that He has said: "Every one therefore that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in Heaven" (Mt. x, 32). Hence it was that the martyrs in millions endured excruciating torments cheerfully in confessing Christ and His Church. Hence it has been that in every age Christians have suffered confiscation of goods, imprisonment, exile and death rather than deny the Faith. And it will be so unto the end, for the Church will continue to the end, and as long as she continues she shall have, like her Founder, persecution and all manner of revilings.

Christian Creed, therefore, means the code of belief and conduct established by Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

It makes a vast difference to man whether he is made for time or eternity. The Creed of Christ, the Creed of Catholics, proclaims that man is made for eternity. It makes a vast difference to man whether or not he is accountable to a power above for his actions. The Creed of Christ, the Catholic Creed, proclaims that after death is the judgment, and that on the sentence of that judgment depends eternal bliss or eternal misery. In a word, it makes a tremendous difference to man whether he is here to do his own will or to do God's will. The Catholic Creed declares that man is here to do God's will, by keeping God's Commandments.

In the only prayer which Christ taught us. He

bade us say: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt. vi, 9, 10). By these words He exhorts us to seek the kingdom of heaven—"Thy kingdom come"; and He specifies how—by doing the will of God—"Thy will be done." Man is inclined to do his own will. That is why he resents any creed that curbs his desires and inclinations.

Unless the Creed of Christ was divine it never could have become the code of Christendom. The early Christian converts were like ourselves, fond of their own ways and wedded to their own will. But because the Church of Christ presented divine credentials, the pagans accepted her Creed and became Christians, often at the cost of possessions, liberty or life. The man whose creed states that this life is the way only—and not the final end of existence—is going to live differently from him whose creed is that this life is all, and whose motto is: "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

Some may say that it is true that creed makes a difference where there is question between Christian creed and pagan creed, but not where there is question of the creed of one Christian denomination and that of another. To this let it be said that some so-called Christian denominations have gradually descended to the level of paganism in everything except grotesqueness. Some so-called Christian denominations have so far departed from the original creed as to reject the divinity of Christ and to throw overboard the Bible. They have reduced their so-called Christianity to a human religion. The creed or code

of such a religion has no divine sanction. A religious creed that has no divine sanction might just as well not exist. It matters little what one believes unless there is back of belief the realization that it must be lived up to. A man-made creed has no sanction except that of external detection and consequent penalties. Such a creed may be defied by clever people. The creed that counts is the one which has God for its Author, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. If creed counts at all it is this kind of creed.

Of course creed will not necessarily make conduct. Man is a free agent. He may know what is right and do what is wrong. But at least divine creed is the light which illumines the right path, whether or not one chooses to walk in it. Unless creed were important, Christ had never said: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mk. xvi, 16).

The Creed of Christ has given the world the best standard of conduct that mankind has known. Ordinarily, only those object to it who find its ideals too lofty. But the nature of man is such that unless his ideals be high, his conduct will be far from right. Even with lofty ideals man only too frequently lapses deplorably. The Creed of Christ is such that it inspires the holiest to still greater holiness, and saves the fallen from giving way to discouragement or despair.

The Creed of Christ is the Creed of the Catholic Church. That is why the Catholic Church never changes. Christ cannot be improved upon. Unlike mere man, He did not have to wait for the experience of the ages to learn what human nature was, nor of

the remedies for its ills. Being God, He knew all things, and when He gave to His Church the truths which constitute her Creed, He gave them once for all. Every Church in the world except the Catholic has modified its belief from the original.

The Catholic is the one unchanged and unchangeable Church. When we say this we mean, of course, with regard to her doctrines and essential rites. From time to time, according to her prudent judgment, she has made changes in disciplinary and administrative matters—such as, for instance, the celibacy of the clergy and the mode of administering the Sacraments. These are accidental changes, and fully within the power granted to her by her Founder when He entrusted to her the government of His Church under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Once for all Christ has instituted the Sacraments. The nature of these can never be changed by His Church. But Christ has left to her the manner of administering them.

Marriage, for example, has been instituted by Our Lord as a Sacrament which unites man and wife indissolubly. The bond holds until death breaks it. There may be separation, but not with right to remarry. This is the essential feature of the Sacrament of Marriage. The Church can never change that. Once man and woman contract marriage, the contract holds until the death of either party. But the Church can specify the conditions and manner of the contract, just as the State may with regard to civil contracts. The State prescribes certain forms and procedures for the legality of a contract. The Church does the same with regard to the marriage

contract. The forms and procedures may change with varying circumstances, but the nature of the contract can never change. Hence the Catholic Church, once a marriage has been lawfully contracted and consummated, has never dissolved it with right to remarry, and never will.

When, therefore, it is said that the Creed of the Catholic Church is unchanged and unchangeable, it is meant that the Deposit of Faith given to the Apostles will never be modified to the end of time. It is this stability of creed which constitutes the peace which Catholics have in the practice of their religion. No matter what sacrifice may be required of them, they gladly make it, knowing that they are doing what God wants of them. The certainty of belief which Catholics possess gives them patience in affliction, courage under difficulties, strength in trials and cheerfulness amidst the vicissitudes of life. It enables them to bear injustice with fortitude, and persecution with resignation.

It may indeed be true that what matters mainly is conduct, but it is also true that conduct mainly depends on creed. Creed is to man what the mariner's compass is to the navigator.

We shall now proceed to set forth in detail the various articles of Catholic Creed. Theologians say that *dogma is the mother of devotion*. The meaning of this is that a right understanding of revealed truth gives the best incentive for an upright life. One reason for the widespread evil in the world today is that the great eternal truths of Revelation are hardly known by a majority of the present generation. It is ignorance or misunderstanding of the es-

sentia] truths of religion which tends to bring religion into disrepute, or to cause its neglect in daily life. We hope to present the Catholic Creed in a way which will make it understood by the man of ordinary intelligence. Every Catholic who is rightly informed on his Faith will not only be a better Christian, but will also be the means of making known to others the truth, the peace and the helpfulness of the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER V

THE TEACHING CHURCH

CHRIST is God. He founded a Church and commissioned her to teach the truths He imparted to her. A teaching Church is a visible Church since teaching requires a living, visible ministry. Christ came for all nations and for all time. He might have written His religion across the sky, or imparted it to each one individually by interior inspiration. But there is question not of what He might have done, but of what He has done. He chose to speak to mankind by His Church—"As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (Jn. xx, 21).

God does not ask us to understand the nature of the truths He has revealed, but to accept them as true simply because He who is Truth has revealed them. The soldier in the ranks does not necessarily understand the significance of the commands issued by the general. Nevertheless, he receives the commands with respect and executes them at the risk of limb and life. Surely the Creator is entitled to the respect and confidence of the creature. If God revealed to us only what He demonstrated He would be acting as man to man. But He is God. He gave us our reason. He is entitled to our respectful submission to what He proclaims.

We should expect mysteries where there is ques-

tion of God. We are a mystery to ourselves, much more must our Maker be a mystery to us. We do not understand how our thoughts originate, nor how they find expression by means of speech. Our thoughts are spiritual, our words are material. No one understands the subtle connection between mind and matter. Yet it exists. So if God sees fit to reveal to us something about Himself which otherwise we should not know, we should be grateful for the knowledge even though we do not comprehend all that it declares.

Perhaps not one in a million understands the facts taught by astronomy, yet because of faith in the astronomer these facts are accepted. God is more trustworthy than an astronomer, and Revelation more true than astronomy. Hence the attitude of the Catholic towards the truths of religion is that of St. Paul, who, when Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus, exclaimed: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix, 6). Christ tells us what we are to do when He bids us to listen to the Church as to Himself in person. Consequently, we receive the teaching of the Church as if God were instructing us. And indeed He is. "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Lk. x, 16).

If it were not for the Church, we should know very little about Christ and His mission to mankind. All that we know of Christ has been transmitted to us by the Church. If we have not faith in the Church we should discard Christianity altogether. If the Church of Christ can inform us erroneously on any truth of Revelation, we are justified in rejecting her entirely. The true religion is absolutely and entirely

true or it is a deception. Christ has proclaimed His Church to be His representative on earth. It pertains to Him to see to it that His representative speaks truly for Him. We accept what she teaches as the absolute truth, as if heard from the lips of Christ.

If what the Church teaches is above our understanding, it is because God wishes it to be so. Christ's hearers did not understand the nature of the Trinity which He Himself declared, nor the nature of the Eucharist, nor of other incomprehensible truths which He taught. Those who say that we should not believe what we do not understand, should, if logical, refuse to believe Christ Himself, who taught the mysteries of Faith—things above our understanding.

The Church is in exactly the same position as Christ with regard to teaching mankind. We go, therefore, to the Church to learn what God wants us to know about Himself and His relation to us. We do not go to the Church for worldly knowledge. Christ did not commission her to teach mankind the things pertaining to time, but to eternity. She is the guide to everlasting life. If she teaches us concerning the things of this world, it is only because they have a bearing on the next world.

Primarily, the Church's mission is the same as Christ's. Christ knew all things. All that philosophers and scientists have discovered during the intervening centuries He knew when He established His Church. Yet He taught not physics, nor chemistry, nor astronomy, nor hygiene, nor psychology, nor geography, nor finance, nor art. He knew all about electricity and ether waves and germs, yet He

did not teach telegraphy nor radio nor pasteurization. So the Church which He founded has for her mission to teach what pertains to eternal life, not what concerns the present life except in relation to eternity. This does not mean that the Church is ignorant with regard to human knowledge, but that her special mission is concerned with eternity—not time.

In point of fact the Church is the most learned institution in the world. She has always been the greatest patroness of the arts and sciences. But these she regards as secondary or auxiliary. She employs them as aids in her paramount work which is to instruct mankind in the things of God. And because knowledge is one of God's best gifts to man, she fosters and uses education as a help in her divinely appointed work.

In a word, the Church, although she has God's guarantee that she shall not err, leaves nothing undone that human industry can suggest, in order to be qualified for her high office. It was by her efforts that the literary treasures of Greece and Rome were preserved and handed down to us. Classical scholarship owes virtually everything to the Catholic Church. It was her schools and scholars that preserved the scholarship of antiquity. This is said in order that we may not think that in bowing down in submission to her teaching we are renouncing common sense.

The greatest minds have yielded unreservedly to the teaching of Christ's Church. Ambrose, Augustine, Justin, Gregory, and a host of others have no intellectual superiors among the best minds of to-

day. Thomas Aquinas has never been excelled as a philosopher, perhaps he has never been equalled. The greatest scientist of modern times, Pasteur, put his faith in the Catholic Church above everything else in life. Foch and Mercier were true children of the Church as well as true patriots and great men. So belief in the teaching of the Church is no rejection of reason. It is rather the highest exercise of reason, for it is most reasonable to believe that God's divinely commissioned representative will represent Him and not misrepresent Him.

Christ could never have said of His Church, "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Lk. x, 16), unless He provided that she should really speak for Him in the things of which He made her His representative. Hence we believe that the Church cannot err in matters of Faith, not because she is wise or learned nor for any other human qualification, but because she is God's mouthpiece, because having His guarantee that she should teach the truth He is bound to see to it that she does teach the truth. God would be responsible for error, if His Church should err.

We go, therefore, to the Church of Christ—the Catholic Church—the only Church which professes that she cannot err—to learn what we should know about God, and His relations with us, and ours with Him.

This is what the Church mainly teaches. She informs us definitely and accurately about God, about ourselves, about our destiny. Cecil Chesterton stated that there was more philosophy on the first page of the penny catechism than in all the books of phi-

losophy in the world. It is evidently so, for the catechism of Christ's Church gives God's pronouncement on the subjects which most concern man.

The story is told of the early Christian missionaries who came to England, that, before beginning their work of conversion, they appeared before the Saxon King, Ethelbert, to plead their cause. The king at the time was holding court, and at his side were his counsellors and chief noblemen. After hearing the missionaries state their object in coming to England, the king was hesitating whether to approve or disapprove of their mission.

While he sat, pensive and uncertain, a strange bird entered the council hall, by an aperture at one end of the building, and flying swiftly across the room disappeared by an opening at the other end, and was lost to sight. Hardly had the bird vanished when an ancient sage, the chief counsellor of the king, arose and addressed his sovereign as follows: "Sire, we have just seen this strange bird in its passage across the room. Whence it came we know not, whither it has flown we do not know. Man is like that bird. Whence we come we do not know. Whither we are going we know not. Our wisest men can tell us nothing of our origin nor of our destiny. If these strange men from afar can tell us—as they profess to be able to do—whence we have come, why we are here, and whither we are going, I say that we should welcome them to our land and to our people."

The king was impressed by this counsel, and after further deliberation, authorized the missionaries to preach Christianity to his people, with the result

that the nation that was pagan became Christian, the king himself setting the example.

Cecil Chesterton was right when he said there was more philosophy in the penny Catholic catechism than in all the books of philosophy. The greatest philosophers can only theorize about the origin and destiny of man. And their theories have, for the most part, left man in greater obscurity regarding himself than he was in before. There are as many theories, almost, as there are minds among philosophers. The result is that man is in a maze with regard to what concerns him most. But when the Catholic Church speaks officially we are hearing not a king, nor a philosopher, nor the wisest of mankind, but the Creator, who made man, who knows man and his destiny.

When the Catholic Church speaks on matters of creed, it is God who is speaking. If this be not so, then away with Christianity altogether! For Christianity is based on the fact that Christ is God and that He speaks by His Church, and the only Church which holds that God speaks infallibly by her is the Catholic Church. If other Churches believed that God spoke by them they would not admit that they could err, as they do admit. The Church by which God speaks can no more err than can God Himself.

It is, therefore, the Catholic Church or no Christianity at all. It is rapidly coming to this. Most of the other denominations are disintegrating and degenerating into rationalistic organizations. They have little or no definite message. They speak with no certainty. They teach with no authority. The Catholic Church speaks like Christ, of whom the

Jews said that He was unlike all other teachers, since He spoke with authority. "Never did man speak like this man" (Jn. vii, 46). This was what most impressed them regarding Christ. This is the outstanding characteristic of the Catholic Church. It is also the reason for the loyalty and devotion and trust and generosity and sacrifice and peace which characterize her children.

Human weakness may prevail with some of her adherents, and account for their lives not being consistent with their creed; but this only serves to manifest another feature of the Church's divine character, for, like the Good Shepherd, Christ, she does not abandon the sheep that have strayed, but goes after them and does all in her power to bring them back to the fold. Christ likened the kingdom of God on earth to a field with wheat and tares, and to a net filled with good and worthless fish. And because He knew human nature as no one else, He established in His Church the tribunal of Penance for the forgiveness and restoration of the sinner. "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (Jn. xx, 23).

Christ Himself not only foresaw, but also foretold wickedness among His followers, for He declared that there would be scandals among the faithful, but at the same time pronounced woe on those who should be guilty. Under His own divine guidance, one of His intimate companions, chosen by Himself, fell miserably. This did not detract from Christ, but from Judas. Christ's teaching was true and divine in spite of the defection of an Apostle. So the teaching

of the Catholic Church is true and divine regardless of whether or not all her children live up to it.

We may leave others to the judgment of God. Our concern is with ourselves and the opportunities God gives us of knowing and serving Him. What may be excusable in others may be condemnable in ourselves. The Jews who heard Our Lord and saw His miracles were in different case from those who lived previously. Likewise the Jews of Palestine in the time of Christ's mission were in different case from those who lived at a distance and who had not the evidence of His divinity before their eyes. It is for God to pass judgment, for He alone knows the conscience of man. One thing is certain, to whom God gives special opportunities and graces, of these He expects and requires special correspondence. With each one it is a matter between the soul and God.

It must be a wonderful favor of God to receive the Faith, since it is the ordinary means appointed by God for attaining everlasting life and glory. What God's extraordinary dispensation in certain cases may be, we do not know. But this we do know, that the declared means of salvation are the Creed and conduct proclaimed by His Church. We shall now set forth that Creed, beginning with God Himself.

What follows will be stated more or less authoritatively, taking for granted that the reader desires to know just what the Church of Christ teaches.

CHAPTER VI

GOD

THE first words of the Apostles' Creed, the Creed of Christ's own Church, are: "I believe in God."

If there be no personal God there can be no religion. *Religion* may be defined as *the personal relationship that exists between man and God*. If either man or God be not a personal, intelligent being there can be no rational communication between them. Opponents of religion understand this. Hence they either deny the existence of God altogether, as atheists; or declare that He is unknowable, as agnostics; or that He is identical with nature, as pantheists; or that everything—including God—is matter, as materialists.

In all these cases religion is ruled out. If there be no God, as atheists assert, relationship with God is out of the question. If God be unknowable, as agnostics hold, communication with Him is impossible. If God be identical with the world, as pantheists affirm, God and man are the same, and communication would be absurd. Finally, if everything be material and operated by mechanical or chemical forces no intellectual relationship is possible. In considering God, therefore, it is necessary to do so with regard to all these various phases of the subject.

It may be said at the outset that the various classes of people who deny a personal God form but an insignificant portion of mankind. Also it may be said that they consist of or follow academic groups, which theorize themselves into notions at variance with the instincts of humanity and the intellectual conclusions of mankind generally. However, as an active minority, by persistence and propaganda, can at times dominate a passive majority, and as at present the opponents of religion are very aggressive, it is desirable to set forth in plain and logical form the fundamental fact of religion—namely, the existence of a personal God.

Among Christians the word *God* signifies the personal Creator and Ruler of the Universe. But the word *god* can have many meanings. Some people speak of nature as God. Others believe that God is a sort of glorified human being. Again a class of people known as pantheists hold that the universe, as a whole, is God. These latter are all materialistic conceptions, and cannot be applied to the Almighty God.

God is a spirit infinitely perfect. Christ Himself has defined God. He said: "God is a spirit" (Jn. iv, 24). But what is a spirit? By what do we recognize or know a spirit? We recognize a flower by its color, odor, shape. But how know a spirit? We recognize a man by his figure or face. To say that a spirit is not a body—that it has neither form, size nor color—is only to say what a spirit *is not*. What *is* a spiritual being?

We may know a spiritual being by what it is capable of doing. For just as we know that an animal can-

not speak, but that a man can, and that consequently speech is a quality which distinguishes a human being; so there are certain things which characterize a spiritual being and by which we distinguish a spiritual from a material being. Design, purpose, free will, adaptation of means to the end, are qualities which distinguish a spiritual being. God has manifested, in creation, these and other qualities of a spiritual nature so that we know He is a spiritual being. Man is a combination of matter and spirit. He has a body which is material and a soul which is spiritual. But God is a pure spirit, infinitely perfect. Man is a composite creature, his body being material, his soul spiritual.

An animal is all material. We know this from the fact that the most perfect animal can have no perceptions except those reached by the senses. An animal acts by instinct, which determines his operations in a fixed manner. An animal can have no concept of anything abstract. For instance, an animal can have no idea of immortality, eternity, infinitude, zero, and so of a thousand notions which can be grasped by a spiritual being only.

Thought requires the capacity to deal with abstract ideas. By *abstract ideas* we mean concepts of things which do not exist in themselves but only as conceived by the mind. *Honor*, for example, is an abstract idea. It is the result of a mental process. *Honor* is something which does not exist by itself. No one ever saw *honor* nor touched *honor*. What size is honor; or what color; or what shape? We observe *honorable* men and *honorable* conduct, but we never saw *honor*. *Honor* is a quality abstracted by

the mind from things or actions. This power of abstraction belongs to the spirit only.

It is so also of free will. An animal has not free will. It always acts in the same way, fixed by nature. A bird builds a marvelous nest, but never varies the style; and sings sweetly, but never varies the tune. A beaver constructs a wonderful house, but never varies the architecture. Animals are ruled by the iron hand of instinct. The silkworm can make silk threads, but not silk cloth. The cow can make milk, but cannot make cheese or butter. So much for instinct.

With regard to ideas. It is only a spiritual being that has the power of abstraction, comparison, calculation and invention. It is only a spiritual being that can compose melodies and design paintings and statues and buildings. It is only a spiritual being that can combine and utilize the forces of nature to effect extraordinary results. Animals do not even know their own strength nor how to employ it. A man on horseback can command a thousand steers. If they could think, they could combine and crush horse and rider. A man by his intelligence can master a herd of elephants, each one of which has a hundred times his strength. Birds sometimes fly in beautiful formation, but it is always the same formation. And so on.

Man alone of all visible creation has understanding and free will. The most sagacious animal cannot impart to another animal the tricks of apparent intelligence taught by intelligent man. Man can instruct man because instruction implies abstract ideas—thought. But man can not instruct an animal.

Man can impart tricks to animals, not by instruction, but, by repeated action of what the senses observe. It is only by constant repetition that the superior mind of man can get an animal to do what is outside instinctive action. Hence, just as we know a flower by its fragrance, form and color so may we know a spiritual being by its faculties of thought and free will.

But how do we know that God has thought and free will? In the same way that we may know that man has these qualities, by what he does. We know that man thinks by observing the effects of his mental activity. Poetry, music, the various arts and sciences, inventions, the variety of his adaptations; all these proclaim that man thinks in the true sense, that he has abstract ideas. Likewise we know that man has free will by the fact that he chooses now one thing, now another; acts one way today, a different way tomorrow; deliberately embraces what causes pain and leaves off what gives pleasure; obliges himself to do whatever he decides on, regardless of consequences. But above all, man's free will is apparent from the fact that he has the power of choice in all the events of life; can say *yes* or *no* to whatever proposition confronts him; and is conscious that his choice is made because he is free to make it or not to make it.

As, therefore, we know that man's soul is spiritual by his works and actions, so we know from the works and actions of God that He is a spiritual being. The architecture of the universe displays understanding of the highest conceivable order. The adaptation of the various parts of the universe one

to another; the exquisite order of the firmament; the laws which govern the physical, vegetable and animal world; these and a thousand similar things manifest the unlimited understanding of the Lord of the Universe.

God's free will is shown by the fact that He endowed man with free will. No one can give what he has not. His free will is also shown by the fact of creation. Creation was not a thing of necessity; it was effected by choice—the choice of Him who created. "God said: Be light made. And light was made" (Gen. i, 3). Again He said: "Let us make man" (Gen. i, 26); and He made man to His own image and likeness—that is, He endowed man with free will and intelligence.

If scientists find buried in the earth implements showing human workmanship, they infer that they were made by man. If alongside such implements be found tablets of a certain date and race they conclude that the implements found with these tablets were those of that age and race. If the implements be artistically wrought and exquisitely adapted to their apparent purpose, the conclusion would be drawn that the race in question was proportionately advanced in civilization. Scientists regard such discoveries as vestiges from which may be inferred more or less the cultural status of the people concerned.

The visible world is filled with vestiges of its Author. By studying these vestiges it is possible to learn something of the Author of them. Throughout the known world there are order and adaptation. Order and adaptation postulate intelligence, hence

the Author of the World is an intelligent being. If we should find an exquisite timepiece on a desert island we should know that it was not fashioned by chance nor by an ignorant or unskilled savage. The works of a watch are so delicate, they are so wonderfully adjusted and adapted to a definite purpose, that only an intelligent being could design and make the intricate mechanism of such a production. So with regard to the marvelous mechanism of the universe; its order, adaptation and adjustment proclaim an intelligent designer and maker.

But all this has, really, little to do with the matter in hand, which is to show what the Church teaches of God. All that has been said is simply a sidelight on the nature of God as perceived by human reasoning. The Church of Christ teaches only what Christ, the Light of the World, has revealed to her.

The first statement of the Church's teaching is a belief in God, and that He is a spirit infinitely perfect. We understand, from what has been said above, what is meant by a spiritual being. However, some may object to the statement of God's being a spiritual being from the fact that Scripture represents Him as having eyes which see everything, ears that hear everything and hands that made everything. The Bible refers to God's countenance being pleased or angry, and to His voice like the thunder. We must remember that Scripture was addressed to human beings, and that consequently God was represented in a way that ordinary human beings could easily understand.

But alongside this description of God there was also the revelation of Him as the incomprehensible

Being, who existed from all eternity; who made all things out of nothing, but by His will only; who was everywhere present; to whom there was no such thing as time or distance; who upheld all things by His invisible might; and discerned all the most hidden secrets of the heart of man. "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? . . . If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there: if I descend into hell, Thou art present" (Ps. cxxxviii, 7, 8). "O Lord God, Creator of all things, dreadful and strong, just and merciful, who alone art the good king, who alone art gracious, who alone art just, and almighty, and eternal, who deliverest Israel from all evil, who didst choose the fathers, and didst sanctify them" (II Mach. i, 24, 25). "To whom then have you likened God? or what image will you make for Him?" (Is. xl, 18). "They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man" (Rom. i, 23).

These and many other Scripture descriptions of God show that He is a spirit. We speak of the wind as sighing and of the ocean as roaring, but by these expressions we do not signify that wind or ocean has a voice. So Scripture speaking of God does so, at times, figuratively, in order to convey more graphically the qualities, or characteristics of God.

God is not only a spirit, but *infinitely perfect*. It is hard to make clear what is meant by *infinite*. The literal significance of the word is *without limit*.

Perhaps a comparison may help us to understand. The light of a wax candle is very limited, that of gas extends further, electricity is brighter still. However, the brightest electric light is very limited in com-

parison with the sun. The light of the sun although apparently unlimited is in fact very definitely limited. From some of the distant heavenly bodies the sun appears to be no more than candlelight, and from others it can not be seen at all. So, even the light of the sun has limits. If the sun were infinite with regard to light, it would be as bright ten billion times farther than the farthest star as it is to us, or to those close to it.

When we say that God is a spirit infinitely perfect we mean that there is no limit to His perfection. Every conceivable perfection exists in Him in its highest degree of perfection. Hence, God is incomprehensible by human or any finite intelligence.

St. Augustine on a certain occasion was meditating on the greatness of God. He was trying to comprehend in some measure the nature of the Infinite. It happened that he was walking along the seashore while engaged in this sublime contemplation, and saw a little child dipping water from the sea with a tiny shell. The Saint said to the child: "What are you doing, my child?" To which the child replied: "I am emptying the ocean with this shell." "But that is impossible, my child," the Saint remarked. "Not any more impossible than for your finite mind to understand the infinite," was the child's rejoinder. The astonished Saint was wholly surprised by the aptness of the child's words, and after a moment's distraction turned to where the child was, to observe him more minutely. The child had vanished. It was an angel. Thereafter Augustine realized that even the keenest human intelligence has limits.

St. Paul, who of all men was qualified to speak

of God, exclaimed: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor?" (Rom. xi, 33, 34).

The inspired writer is at a loss to find expression for the vision that was granted him: "Who is able to declare His works? For who shall search out His glorious acts? And who shall show forth the power of His majesty? . . . Nothing may be taken away, nor added, neither is it possible to find out the glorious works of God" (Ecclus. xviii, 2, 5).

God is a spirit infinitely perfect. This is the Being who made the world and rules it. "There is one most high Creator Almighty, and a powerful King . . . who sitteth upon His throne, and is the God of dominion" (Ecclus. i, 8). Now we understand why reverence is due to God. He is our Maker, we belong to Him. He is our Lord, we owe Him service. "Now to the King of Ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (I Tim. i, 17).

St. Ignatius Loyola in his endeavor to have us understand God's greatness and our littleness, and consequently what our reverence for Him should be, institutes the following comparison. What is an individual man in comparison with all the people in the world? What are all the people in the world in comparison with all the people who have lived on this earth? What are all the people who have ever lived in comparison with Him who made all things out of nothing, and who is Lord of Time and Etern-

ity? Hence, the Psalmist exclaims: "What is man, O Lord that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him?" (Ps. viii, 5). Man, in the presence of his Maker, is so insignificant that his only sentiments should be those of adoration. In reverence he should exclaim with the inspired writer: "O Lord there is none like Thee: and there is no other God beside Thee" (I Paral. xvii, 20).

God, being the Creator, is the source of all the good there is in the world. He is the Infinite Beauty, from which emanate all the loveliness and charm which in nature captivate the heart of man. "Of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things" (Rom. xi, 36). This is the principle and foundation of religion. All that we are and have belong to God as Creator and Ruler. We owe Him, therefore, reverence, service, love.

This brings us to the first question of the catechism: "Who made you?"; and the answer, "God made me." "Why did God make you?"; "He made me to know, love and serve Him in this life, and to be happy with Him forever in the next." The basis of man's relation to God is that man is a creature and God the Creator. When this relation is recognized and lived up to, man is in right accord with his Maker and tending towards the glorious end for which he was made. "O God, Thou art great and to be served!"

CHAPTER VII

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

WE have given a definition or description of God, which presupposes His existence. Strange as it may seem, there are some who deny the existence of a personal God. The Creed states: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth." God, although a spirit, and imperceptible by the senses of man, may be known by the intellect of man.

If a man finds a beautiful picture in a forest or desert, he knows that someone has painted it, even if he has not seen the artist at work, or in any way observed him. Man's intellect tells him, further, that an artistic picture can be made only by a being of intelligence. It is so as we look out upon the world. No painting of man ever equalled any of the numerous masterpieces that nature exhibits. Nature is God's canvas, and from what we see in it we may know that an intelligent being has been at work.

A great cathedral points to a great architect. The universe is a marvelous structure. Rather it is a wondrous mechanism, fitted exquisitely part to part, working harmoniously and in unison, and manifesting in every detail the perfection of adaptation. Hence, the Psalmist exclaims: "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth

the work of His hands" (Ps. xviii, 2). The invisible Maker is known from what is made. "For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. i, 20).

An effect must have a cause. An intelligent effect postulates an intelligent cause. Adaptation, such as we see in nature, shows comparison, foresight, knowledge of the nature of things and other qualities pertaining to an intellectual being only. Hence we rightly conclude that nature has an intelligent Author, whom we call *God*.

If you find an acorn, you conclude that it came from the oak. But where did the oak come from? You may say it came from the acorn. But who knows whether the tree came from the acorn or the acorn from the tree? Whichever came from the other, the one which was prior owes its origin to someone or something. Someone made the first acorn or the first tree. The acorn, with its capacity to develop into a great oak, is as wonderful as the oak itself. Who put into the acorn the qualities which enable it to develop in a tree?

It may be said that the acorn evolved from matter of some sort. But where did that matter get its power to evolve into the acorn? Evolution itself must be explained. What caused evolution? Who gave matter its power to evolve? So we are forced back and back until we come to the point where we must say that matter, with its power of evolving, is eternal, or else that it had its origin from an eternal being. We cannot keep going back forever. At last we reach a point where we must say that matter had

a beginning or else is eternal. Matter cannot be eternal for the reason that it is under law. The eternal is infinite, hence, not under law.

Other reasons could be given to show that the origin of the world must be assigned to the Infinite and Eternal Being we call God. The variety of forces in the universe and the harmonious way in which they act give evidence of foresight and adaptation which can be found only in an intelligent First Cause. Hence, the Apostle was right when he said that from the visible things of the world we can know the existence of the invisible Creator.

Scripture is justified, therefore, when it condemns those who fail to recognize the Creator from visible creation. "By these good things that are seen, they could not understand Him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the Workman. But having imagined either the fire, or the wind, or the swift air, or the circle of stars, or the great water, or the sun and moon, to be the gods that rule the world. With whose beauty if they being delighted, took them to be gods; let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they: for the First Author of Beauty made all those things. Or if they admired their power and their effects, let them understand by them, that He who made them, is mightier than they: For by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby" (Wisd. xiii, 1-5).

At a recent meeting in Glasgow of the foremost scientists of the world, it was proclaimed that science was not opposed to a spiritual Creator. It was

affirmed that the unity everywhere displayed in creation gave evidence of a Master Designer of infinite intelligence. Materialism has run its course. Like everything else opposed to Revelation, materialism needed but *time* in order to refute itself.

All the scientists in the world cannot make a blade of grass. But what is a blade of grass compared to the structure of the immeasurable universe? It requires infinite power to produce something from nothing. Hence the Creed states: "I believe in God, the Father *Almighty*." One who is almighty can do all things. God being infinite—which is the same as almighty—is the "*Creator* of Heaven and Earth." Revealed religion informs us therefore that our origin is from God, who, as the Almighty Father, gave us our existence.

Christ it is who bids us call the Creator, "Our Father." What a wonderful comfort it is to know that the great First Cause is not a distant being, who is not concerned with us, but that He is *our* Father! From the fact that He is *our* Father we know that He cares for us, that He loves us; and that consequently if at times His hand rests heavily upon us, it is for our good, for our true good, our eternal welfare. A human father has the tenderest love for his children. Whence came that solicitude and love which characterize the human parent? From the Almighty Father.

Revelation further tells us that the Almighty Father so loves us as to give His only Son to us, as the measure of His love. Would you know how much God loves us? The measure is His only Son; therefore, God loves us infinitely. When a nation's safety

or existence is at stake, she calls on her subjects for defense. When a father gives his son to the cause he is said to make the supreme sacrifice. So God made the supreme sacrifice of love when He gave His only Son.

By this we know, indeed, that He is *our* Father in heaven. What a wonderful dignity this gives us! We are the children of God. "To as many as receive Him, He gives them the power to become the sons of God" (Jn. i, 12). We have God for *our* Father. It is an honor to serve a great monarch. It is a far greater honor to serve the Ruler of the Universe. It is an unspeakable honor to be the children of this great Ruler, the Lord of Time and Eternity.

God who has proven His love for us wants ours in return. "My son, give Me thy heart" (Prov. xxiii, 26).

This relationship between God and us, between the Creator and His creature—man, constitutes us the noblest work of God. Not even the angels can call God, *Father*. It is man alone that may call God, *Father*; and Jesus Christ, *Brother*. God should be, therefore, the principal object of our lives.

"Why did God make me?" "God made me that I might know, love and serve Him in this life, and be happy with Him forever in the next." That is the solution of the problem of life,—God's solution. "What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? . . . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever" (Ps. lxxii, 25-26). This gives life a meaning; it makes life worth while; it is a destiny worthy of God's masterpiece. St. Augustine exclaimed: "O

God, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts will never be at rest until they rest in Thee."

Christ did not come to make us rich, nor to give us a long life, nor to enable us to attain worldly honors. He had none of these things Himself. He came to give us something which this world cannot give—adoption into the divine family. "To as many as receive Him, He gives them the power to become the sons of God" (Jn. i, 12). Our destiny, therefore, is to become members of the heavenly family, of which Almighty God is Father. This is a destiny so grand that if God Himself had not declared it, we should not dare hope for it. It makes the lowliest life sublime, and into the darkest hours of human struggle it sends the light of hope and blessed cheer. All this is contained in the first article of the Apostles' Creed—"I believe in God, the Father Almighty."

It is God, Himself, who assures us that He is, besides our Creator, also *our Father*. The mission of Christ's own Church is so to direct us through life that in the end we may look upon the Creator of Heaven and Earth and salute Him as *our Father*. The real purpose of religion is to lead us to God as our last end. Everything else is secondary. The object of these considerations is to help us to know God better, in order that we may love Him more ardently and serve Him more faithfully. The most fortunate worldly life is a failure if it bring us not to our blessed eternal home. And the most miserable human existence is a magnificent success if, in the end, it bring us to Him whom Christ Our Lord taught us to address as "*Our Father* who art in heaven" (Mt. vi, 9).

CHAPTER VIII

JESUS CHRIST—THE SON OF GOD

THE Creed of Christ's Church states that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. By *the Son of God* is meant *the True Eternal Son of the True Eternal God*. There is but one God, but in God there are three persons—the Trinity. We should never have known this except by Revelation, since it is something to which the human mind could not by itself attain. We shall consider the Trinity later on. Here it is enough to say that as in the soul of man there are the three powers—the will, the memory and the understanding; so in a somewhat similar, but not the same, manner, in the one God there are three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

We say of Jesus Christ that He is the True Eternal Son of the Eternal Father. This does not mean that the Son is inferior to the Father, nor that the Son did not always exist. Light and heat come from the sun but that does not mean that the sun existed before the light and heat. The light and heat are not the sun, although they originate with the sun. Of course, these comparisons are not exact, but may help us to realize that there is no contradiction in the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the

Trinity, and also that of the Incarnation and of the Eucharist, are above our reason, but not against it.

Jesus Christ is not only true God, but also true man. At present we shall consider Jesus Christ as God. When it is said that Christ is God, it is meant that He is Jehovah, the Creator, the Almighty and the Eternal. This is evident in the first place from the prophecies concerning the Messiah. Jesus said on a certain occasion: "Search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of Me" (Jn. v, 39).

If the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Redeemer are placed side by side with the circumstances relating to Jesus Christ in the New Testament it will be found that all that was foretold by the prophets concerning the Messiah was fulfilled in the person of Christ. It was foretold that the Messiah was to have a special herald to announce His coming; that He was to be a descendant of Abraham and David; that He was to be born in Bethlehem; that His mother was to be a virgin; that He should come when Israel had lost sovereignty; etc.

Regarding the character and career of the Messiah, it was foretold that He would be the Teacher of the lowly; that He would be merciful; that numerous miracles would be wrought by Him; that He would enter Jerusalem in triumph; that He would be betrayed, insulted, beaten, reputed with the wicked; His hands and feet pierced; that He would suffer an ignominious death; and, finally, that He would rise from the dead. A casual reading of the New Testament will show the exact fulfillment

of all these prophecies in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, it was predicted of the Messiah that after His Resurrection, His kingdom should be established, that it should last forever, and extend over the whole earth.

But why was it that with all these fulfillments, the Jews did not accept Christ as the Messiah? The best among the Jews did accept Him, and the whole nation was on the point of receiving Him, when the Jewish leaders—jealous of their position—inaugurated the vilest propaganda known in history to discredit and condemn Him. This also was prophesied of the Messiah—that He should be rejected by His own.

Christ, therefore, was justified in appealing to Scripture to confirm His claims, seeing that in Him all the predictions concerning the Redeemer were fulfilled. "Search the Scriptures . . . they give testimony of Me" (Jn. v, 39). Christ, therefore, being the Redeemer, is all that Scripture declared the Redeemer should be. There it is stated that the Redeemer was to be *God*—that "God Himself will come and deliver you." (Is. xlv, 4.) He was called "*Emmanuel*"—which means *God with us* (Is. vii, 14). He was also termed "*Wonderful*," "*God the Mighty*," "*the Father of the world to come*," "*the Prince of peace*" (Is. ix, 6).

In the New Testament, God the Father, Himself, bears witness to Christ's divinity. In the beginning of Christ's ministry—at His baptism; and near the end—at His transfiguration; the Eternal Father proclaimed of Jesus that "This is My beloved Son" (Mt. iii, 17: xvii, 5).

Christ Himself attested His own divinity. Ordi-

narily, self-testimony does not necessarily imply the truth, but in Christ's case it does, because of His character. Christ said of Himself: "I and the Father are One" (Jn. x, 30). He commended those who acknowledged Him as God, as when Peter said to Him "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. xvi, 16), and in consequence Jesus conferred upon Peter the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In the most emphatic manner, and in the most unequivocal language, Christ repeatedly declared He was God, and also assumed the prerogatives of God. He said that all power was His in heaven and earth (Mt. xxviii, 18); and that He was the Judge of all Mankind (Jn. v, 22). When the high priest solemnly adjured Christ in the name of Jehovah to say whether He was the Son of the blessed God, He declared that He was (Mk. xiv, 61-62).

We cannot imagine Christ saying a thing He knew to be untrue. To say He was God, if He was not, was worse than a lie, it was blasphemy. It was the greatest crime of history unless He was truly God. Some virtues are compatible with human weaknesses and defects. The frailty of human nature is only too evident. But for one who professed to be the Leader and Model of Mankind to deliberately state what was false is beyond credence.

Unless Christ was clearly out of His mind, He was what He stated Himself to be—He was God. But He whose discourses are the wonder of mankind; whose teaching is so sublime, so consoling, so energizing; whose words and life are the greatest treasure of Christendom, was not out of His mind.

He who has done more for mankind than all the philosophers and rulers of the world was not a madman. He who established a Church which has been the admiration of the greatest minds of all ages was not of unsound mind.

If Christ be not truly God He is either a shameful impostor or a deluded fool. But He who founded Christianity was neither fool nor impostor; nor could the Almighty approve of Christ's mission by miracles if He were not what He claimed to be.

A miracle is God's seal on whatever it stamps. God sealed Christ's mission by the greatest and best-authenticated of divine deeds or miracles. Consequently we have Almighty God's authority for believing that Jesus Christ is what He proclaimed Himself to be—the Son of God. When, therefore, Christ's own Church proclaims in her Creed the doctrine that Jesus Christ is true God, she is but echoing the declaration of the Eternal Father, who said of Jesus: "This is My beloved Son" (Mt. iii, 17: xvii, 5).

Unless Christianity be a huge hoax, Jesus Christ is God. For centuries Christendom professed Christ as God. It was the basis of Christian belief. Unless Christianity were false all those ages, Christ is God. If Christianity were false at any time, it is the most shameful imposition this world has known and the sooner it is done away with, the better. Rather bolshevism than false Christianity. But Christianity is true. All that is best in the world is due to Christianity. Christian civilization is the highest attained by man, and the highest attainable. Christianity is as true as that Christ is God—no more, no less.

Deny the real divinity of Christ, and Christianity as a divine religion vanishes.

If Christianity be not a divine religion it is but a human institution with no authoritative sanction, no binding force, no guarantee of its promises. If Christianity be not a divine religion it is less than all this—or rather worse; for it is a huge fraud, since it has always claimed to be divinely founded. If, therefore, Christ be not God, the Church which He founded is an imposture. He solemnly proclaimed He was God when He established His Church. "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (Jn. xx, 21). "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Mt. xxviii, 18-20).

None but God could speak like that. None but God could assure his presence to the end of time with his ambassadors. None but God could say as Christ did: "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh to the Father, but by Me" (Jn. xiv, 6). "Jesus spoke, and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said: Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. . . . This is eternal life: That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (Jn. xvii, 1, 3).

Almighty God's definition of Himself was that He was the Ever-existing Being: "I AM WHO AM"

(Exod. iii, 14). Christ proclaimed that He, too, was the Ever-existing One: "Before Abraham was made, I am" (Jn. viii, 58). Hence St. John says of Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by Him. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (Jn. i, 1, 3, 14). None but God could be thus portrayed. Near the end of his Gospel, St. John declares: "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing, you may have life in His name" (Jn. xx, 30-31).

It was because Christ was truly God that He said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live" (Jn. xi, 25). Unless Christ was God He was the most heinous impostor that this world has known. None but a madman could make His claims if He were not God. Christ proclaimed that He was the Light of the world—"I am the Light of the World: he that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jn. viii, 12); the Judge of the whole world—"For neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son" (Jn. v, 22); that He had the power of forgiving sins—"And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. . . . But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then said He to the man sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy

house. And he arose, and went into his house" (Mt. ix, 2-7); etc., etc. We must therefore either reject Christ as an impostor or adore Him as God.

Jesus Christ is the most momentous person in the annals of mankind. He is the dividing point of the history of the world. We date the years as B.C.—before Christ; or A.D.—after Christ. Christ is thus the turning point of history. What made Him so? He was not a great a military conqueror like Alexander, nor a great political ruler like Cæsar. There was no pomp nor circumstance about Him. He was born in a stable and died on a cross, condemned to the shameful death of a malefactor. Yet He lives today in the hearts of millions. He is King of more hearts than any monarch that ever lived. Christ has now—nearly two thousand years after His shameful death on Calvary—more loyal subjects than the mightiest ruler of earth. There are more people today who are willing to lay down their lives for Christ than for the most beloved monarch that ever reigned. Millions of Christians are ready to die for Christ. Hundreds of millions are living for Him.

Napoleon was once complimented on the love and devotion of his subjects. He replied: "Do not talk to me of the love and devotion of my subjects. They follow me in success. But there is One who died in shame and failure nearly nineteen hundred years ago but who lives today in the hearts of subjects more loving and more numerous than any living monarch ever had."

Napoleon was right. Christ lives today. Missionaries in every part of the world are sacrificing their

lives for the extension of His kingdom. Hundreds of thousands of heroic souls are leading sanctified lives in the seclusion of the cloister for love of Him. Hundreds of millions of men and women the world over are striving to live holily in every career of life because of their love and reverence for Him. And why? Not because He was a man who lived in Palestine some twenty centuries ago! But because He showed by His life and teaching that He was what He proclaimed Himself to be—True God of True God, the only-begotten Son of the Almighty Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth.

God so loved the world as to give His only Son. Jesus Christ was Almighty God's Christmas Gift to mankind. It was the Gift of the Eternal Father to the undeserving world. There was no Christmas before Christ. It was Jesus who brought to mankind the beautified spirit of giving which characterizes the world at Christmas time.

We are apt to forget that we owe to Christ all that is really worth while in life. Before Christ there were no hospitals, no homes for the aged and helpless, no shelter for orphans, no mercy for the prisoners of war. Our Red Cross Society and other such are due to the spirit of charity breathed into the world by Christ. All these wonderful institutions of benevolence were unknown in the cultured Roman world. When pagan civilization was at its highest—morality was at its lowest. Cruelty was almost deified. Christ changed all that. And not by wealth, force nor eloquence, but by His own life and teaching.

He who thus changed the world for the better

was neither an impostor nor a lunatic. He was what He solemnly proclaimed Himself to be: "The high priest asked Him, and said to Him: Art thou the Christ the Son of the blessed God? And Jesus said to him: I AM" (Mk. xiv, 61-62). He who thus solemnly declared He was God, was so in very deed. Even rationalists proclaim that Jesus was the most perfect man that ever lived. The most perfect man was neither an impostor nor insane. When He declared He was divine He was what He proclaimed Himself to be—the true Son of God.

Jesus was God's Christmas Gift to mankind. They who rightly receive Him may become partakers of the divine nature: "To as many as receive Him, He gives them the power to become the sons of God" (Jn. i, 12).

The divinity of Christ is the most important point of religion. It concerns us more than any other matter in our lives. It concerns each one of us individually. For if Christ is God, as He solemnly proclaimed that He was, He bears a personal relationship to each one of us. It makes all the difference in the world to us whether or not Christ is God. If He is God, He must be obeyed as God, worshiped as God, trusted as God. If He were not God, He was, if not insane, a blasphemer, an impostor, the most criminal deceiver that this world has known.

We must choose one of these alternatives. Christ was either God or a blasphemer, if He was not insane. No sane merely human person would claim to be what Jesus Christ solemnly declared Himself to be. Christ was put on oath by the highest religious authority of His people and solemnly swore

that He was God. He meant God in the true sense, and so the sacred tribunal understood Him to mean, because otherwise it would not have accused Him of blasphemy and declared Him to be guilty of death (Mt. xxvi, 63-64).

Now, I am going to be brief and to the point. It hurts my sense of reverence to say that Christ, if He be not God, is the greatest fraud this world has known. I say fraud, because He was not insane. Christ was the best-balanced person in history, as even His opponents admit. The Jews so admired His intellect that they said: "Never did man speak like this man" (Jn. vii, 46). Time and again they endeavored to catch Him in His speech, only to find that they themselves were snared (Lk. xx, 20). The leaders of the Jews were finally so convinced of His mental superiority and sound judgment that they decided regretfully to interrogate Him no further (Mt. xxii, 15-46). Not once in His whole career was He taken off guard. Not once did He display the slightest confusion at the subtle questions of His adversaries. His parables and discourses are considered the most sublime literature in the annals of mankind. Intellectually Christ towers above the loftiest human genius. Such a person was not insane. The best-balanced character in history was not under a delusion.

It remains, therefore, that Christ, if He were not God, was a bad man, a wilful deceiver, a criminal impostor. No one with His intelligence would presume to claim to be God unless He was God or an impostor. Moreover not even a sane impostor would claim to be Almighty God. A merely human

person of the intelligence of Christ would know that to claim to be God would be preposterous. An impostor is too clever to claim the impossible.

Christ proclaimed that He was God. Are we to believe Him? This is a personal question to each one of us individually. Do I believe that Jesus Christ, the sanest and most upright person in the annals of mankind, was what He solemnly declared Himself to be? If I do not believe He is God I must set Him down as insane or an impostor. The whole world is a unit in declaring that Jesus Christ is the most perfect person in history. The most perfect person that the world has known was neither a deceiver nor deceived; He was neither a lunatic nor an impostor.

There is no way out of it. We must accept Christ as God or reject Him as a fool or fraud. But neither fool nor fraud was the Founder of Christianity. Neither fool nor fraud gave the world its sublimest ideals. Neither fool nor fraud inspired the world with the heroism of the martyrs and missionaries. Neither fool nor fraud founded a kingdom which, without the force of arms or the prestige of power or wealth, is the admiration of mankind. Neither fool nor fraud established a religion which revolutionized the world, and replaced debased paganism by exalted Christianity.

If believing in Christ did not mean living by His standards, the whole world would believe in Him as the Eternal Son of the Eternal God.

If Christ is God His teaching and morality must be accepted as the proclamations of God. Some there are who select the agreeable things of His teaching but reject what does not appeal to them. This is to

regard Him as man only. If Christ is God He is all true. God cannot be partly true and partly false. All His teaching is divine truth or nothing. We must take Christ and His doctrine completely or reject them altogether. Some people select what suits them of Christ's teaching and ignore the rest. This is to insult God, if Christ is God. And if He be not God His teaching is no more worth than that of any human teacher, whose doctrine we are free to accept or reject, as it pleases us.

But if Christ is God He must be worshiped as God, obeyed as God, served as God. He must be believed not only when He declares that He is Love, but also when He proclaims that He is Justice. Not only when He preaches charity, but also when He preaches penance. Not only when He tells us He is our Saviour, but also when He states that He is our Judge. Not only when He promises heaven to the good, but when He declares that hell is the destination of the wicked. To believe in heaven on the word of Christ, and not to believe in hell on the same word is to treat Him as part true and part false; it is to insult Him and to stultify human reason. Accept Christ as God or reject Him altogether. That is the only logical procedure. But to accept Him as part true and part false is to insult reason and to insult Christ.

Christ gave us Christianity. It was Christ who made woman to be respected and man to be considerate of his fellow man. It was Christ who introduced charity into the world at large. It was Christ who proclaimed the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. From these two doctrines have

come the greatest blessings to humanity that the world has known.

Christ came into the world in a manger and departed from it on a cross. He had neither riches, nor powerful influence, nor learned associates. Yet He accomplished the greatest work ever done on this earth. He used the weak and despised things of the world to carry out His great undertaking in order that it might be evident that it was the work of God and not of man.

Christ by His sublime teaching and noble example has done more for the welfare of humanity than all the sages, rulers and conquerors of the world combined. He who thus stands out as the most perfect person in the world was neither fool nor fraud. He was what He proclaimed Himself to be under oath. "The high priest said to Him: I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God? Jesus said to him: Thou hast said *it* (Mt. xxvi, 63-64).

Did Jesus speak the truth when He thus swore that He was God? Each one must answer that for Himself.

Christians are idolaters if Christ be not God, and Christ is responsible for the idolatry, for He proclaimed that He was God. The Crib of Bethlehem was a myth if Christ were not God. But Christians are not idolaters, and the Babe of Bethlehem is not a myth. Idolatry and myth never could have given to the world what Christianity has given to it. Christ is God. Blessed are they who live by Him and for Him. He is the Way, and the Truth and the Life (Jn. xiv, 6). He is the solution of the problem of

life. "To as many as receive Him, He gives them the power to become the sons of God" (Jn. i, 12). That gives life a meaning and purpose. That makes life worth while. God became man in order that man may become a partaker of the divine nature. The Almighty Father, in giving us the Babe of Bethlehem, gave us a title to membership in the divine family. It rests with each one of us, individually, to attain, through Christ, the inheritance of everlasting life with God.

We have seen that Christ proclaimed that He was the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, True God of True God. In the history of the world no sane man except Jesus Christ ever made that claim. It is certain that Christ claimed to be God, and God in the true sense. The Jews were the best judges of what He meant when He declared that He was God. They were on the spot. They were His people. His language was theirs. He was addressing them on the most vital matter of religious belief.

Christ not only said He was God Almighty, but moreover assumed the attributes of God Almighty. The Creator's definition of Himself, as given in the Old Testament, is that He is the Ever-existing Being—that is, One who has neither beginning nor end; to whom there is no past nor future; but, to whom all is present. He said of Himself: "I AM WHO AM" (Exod. iii, 14),—namely, the Eternal One; the Ever-existing One. Jesus gave the same definition of Himself when He affirmed "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am" (Jn. viii, 58). The Jews understood the significance of this statement for they regarded Him as guilty of blas-

phemy, because He made Himself to be God, and they adjudged Him to be worthy of death. If Christ did not claim to be God in the true sense the Jews had never planned to stone Him to death as they did on this occasion (Jn. viii, 59).

Again, just previous to the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, Jesus said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live" (Jn. xi, 25). Who but God could speak thus? Martha replying to Him said: "Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world" (Jn. xi, 27).

On another occasion when Jesus had proclaimed that He and the Father were one and the same God—"I and the Father are One" (Jn. x, 30)—the Jews realizing that He asserted that He was True God, took up stones to stone Him. Jesus answered them:

"Many good works I have shown you from My Father; for which of those works do you stone Me? The Jews answered: For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered: . . . If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not; but if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father" (Jn. x, 32-38).

None but a crazy man would thus assume to be God, unless it were God Himself who spoke.

Almost every page of the Gospel makes it clear that Christ affirmed that He was God in the true

sense—the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, True God of True God.

In order that we may realize what manner of person it was who thus declared He was God, let us look at a brief portrait of Christ as drawn by one of the greatest students of character of modern times.

“In Jesus we find ardent zeal and inexhaustible patience, noble fervor and indulgent leniency, holy seriousness and sunny cheerfulness, majestic greatness and the deepest humility, inflexible determination and the sweetest gentleness, powerful energy and quiet self-possession, the warmest love for sinners and invincible hatred of sin, compassionate sympathy and strictest justice, irresistible attractiveness and fearless frankness, incorruptible truthfulness and extreme forbearance, mildness and force, resignation and resistance, adamant strength and motherly tenderness, indefatigable outward activity and inward contemplation. In everything—in thinking and willing, in speaking and achieving, in precept and in practice, in doing and in suffering, in life and in death—He is equally great and perfect. In Him combine in wonderful harmony all the higher and lower powers of His soul, His feelings and sentiments, understanding and will, idealism and realism, an intense sense of reality as regards the things of this world and a ceaseless striving to promote the kingdom of heaven” (Felder: *Christ and the Critics*; Trans. Stoddard. Vol. ii, p. 212).

Thus for the pen-portrait of Jesus, who is universally declared to be the most perfect person this world has known. This is Jesus, who, as we have seen, repeatedly and solemnly proclaimed Himself to be the Eternal Son of the Eternal God. We cannot set down Jesus as unbalanced, nor mistaken as to His own identity. Therefore, we must logically accept Him as God.

The personality of Jesus is altogether unique. No other being of history has exerted such an influence on mankind by his personality as has Jesus. With other great personages it is mostly their achievements that win admiration. But with Jesus it is Himself that attracts our esteem and wins our love. The personality of Jesus has captivated the heart of mankind.

Napoleon, a deep student of men and affairs, commenting on the power which Jesus exercises on the hearts of men, says:

"What a Conqueror is Jesus, who controls humanity at will and wins to Himself not only one nation but all peoples. He claims the love of men, that is to say, the most difficult thing in the world to obtain. He claims the heart; that which the wisest of men cannot force from his truest friend, that which no father can compel from his children, no wife from her husband, no brother from his brother—the heart. Jesus claims it, and He obtains it. He kindles the flame of a love which causes one's self-love to die, and which triumphs over every other love. Why should we not recognize in this Miracle of Love, the Eternal Word which created the world?" (Migne Dict. Apol. i, 1746.)

Thus for the comments on Christ by Napoleon, whom no one will accuse of excessive admiration of others. It was this Jesus who claimed and claims the heart of man, who declared solemnly that He was the Son of God.

Today, nearly two thousand years after His ignominious death on Calvary, Jesus is King of more loving subjects than any monarch who ever ruled. His empire over the hearts of men is the greatest that this world has known. It is as active now as

when it exercised its wonderful influence over the chosen companions of His earthly apostolate, when at His mere glance men left all things to follow Him. There is nothing like it in the history of the world.

Today there are literally millions of the world's best men and women devoting their lives to a career of service and sacrifice for the love of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In every walk of life, in every part of the world, there are lovers of Jesus who count everything as nothing in comparison with pleasing Him and winning His favor. Missionaries in distant lands deprive themselves of everything that the heart of man clings to, and undertake tasks which the heart of man shrinks from, in order to manifest their love for Him who first proved His love for them by the Supreme Sacrifice of Calvary. Who but God could have chosen the cross as the door to the hearts of men?

Christ has inspired more heroism, uplifted more fallen ones, encouraged more disheartened ones, and given more peace to the souls of men, than all the great sages, philosophers and scientists of the world combined. Yet this is the God whom a so-called scientist, at a recent convention of scientific men, declared was outworn and must be replaced by one made by human ingenuity. Some so-called scientists would replace Jehovah by a mechanical god after their own fashioning—a god who would be their servant, not their Lord. They would have a god who would allow them to be gods themselves—a law unto themselves; thus making a god who would be a panderer to passion, like the gods of the pagans of old.

It is not because Jesus Christ has failed to give convincing evidence of His divinity that He is rejected by the world, but because His standards are so high and His morality so sublime. If Christ preached self-indulgence instead of self-denial, the world would readily acclaim Him divine. But because the world is a worshiper of self, and wants a god who will approve of human weakness and vice rather than One whose will it must obey, it rejects Christ, and proclaims His Eternal Father an outworn deity who must be replaced by a new concept of God. In other words the world wants to fashion its own god and worship a man-made deity as did the pagans of Greece and Rome in the days of idolatry.

Jesus Christ, the Founder of Christianity, is not the right concept of God for some so-called scientists. But real scientists such as Favre, the world's greatest entomologist; and Pasteur, the father of modern medicine; and Mendel the discoverer of the principles of heredity; these, and numberless other real scientists, not only saw no need of a new concept of God but found in Jesus Christ, the True Son of the True Eternal God, the true concept of the Creator of Heaven and earth and all things.

"A little learning is a dangerous thing." Most people who reject the Christian concept of God, including some so-called scientists, know little or nothing about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Most of them have never read the Gospels through. They do not know that the greatest scholars of the world have investigated the claims of Christ and found that they are the best-established claims of history. Some so-

called scientists swallow whole the unsupported theories of pseudo-science, but reject unreflectingly the claims of Christ supported by the most scientific evidence of any fact in the annals of mankind. Only those want a new concept of God who know not the God they would discard.

In proportion as men live right, in that proportion will they find the God of Christianity to be the Creator and Lord of the world and the Universal Judge of mankind. The Creed of Christ's own Church states: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." This was the belief of the Apostles. This is the Creed of Christians today. This is the truth about Him who made us and all things. Blessed are they who know, love and serve the Almighty Father and Jesus Christ His Eternal Son, True God of True God.

Jesus Christ revealed, once for all, the true nature of God. Christ's concept of God is true because it is God's own revelation of Himself. Pseudo-scientists will come and go, but the concept of God, as made known to mankind by Jesus Christ, will endure forever.

CHAPTER IX

JESUS CHRIST—TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN

THE Apostles' Creed states that the Son of God became man: ". . . Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." This statement contains two truths which are fundamentals of Christianity: (1) that God became man; and, (2) that His Mother was a virgin.

When we say that *God became man* it is not meant that God ceased to be God and was changed into man; nor is it meant that remaining God He became closely connected with man. The meaning of the Incarnation of the Son of God is that Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, assumed the nature of man, substantially uniting it to His own divine nature, so that in the one person, Jesus Christ, there are the two natures, the human and the divine. Jesus Christ is but one person—not two. The two natures are united substantially in Him—somewhat as in man the material and spiritual natures of body and soul are united—forming but one person.

When at Cana the water was changed into wine by divine power, the water ceased to be water, becoming a new substance entirely. Not thus did the Son of God become man. God is immortal, infinite, eternal. He can never cease to be what He has al-

ways been. How then did He become man? Not by detracting in any way from His divine nature, not by ceasing to be what He always was; but by taking an inferior nature—humanity—and uniting it to His divine nature, thus combining in His divine person two natures—the human and the divine.

There is nothing in nature quite similar to the Incarnation of the Son of God, hence it is difficult to comprehend it even partially. For this reason it is termed a mystery. We believe it, not because we understand it, but because God has revealed it. He is our authority for it. That is enough. St. Augustine said that he would not believe that the Catholic religion was divine if it taught only what man could devise or comprehend. He said that a religion that was from God, and that told us about God, must necessarily contain mysteries, since God was a mystery to man.

Every religion, except that revealed by God, teaches only what man can devise and comprehend. The religion of Jesus Christ tells us truths that God alone could know and teach. *How* God became man we do not know, except that it was by the power of the Holy Ghost. *That* He became man we do know, on the word of God: "The Word was made flesh" (Jn. i, 14). Scripture states that

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by Him. . . . He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (Jn. i, 1-14).

It would be impossible to state the fact of the Incarnation of the Son of God more clearly than this. The word *incarnation* comes from the Latin, meaning *in the flesh*. It signifies the coming of the Son of God into the world in the flesh, or with a body, or as a human being.

The term *Word* requires explanation. With man a *word* is *the external expression of the invisible mind*. A *word* is *the perceptible presentation of immaterial thought*. A *word* is *the image or manifestation of the spiritual mind*. So, in Scripture, the Son of God is *the Word*, or *the manifestation of the Invisible God*. Christ is the Word—the external representation of the Deity—manifesting to us the love, the mercy, the goodness and the power of God.

By assuming human nature Christ showed us, in a way we could comprehend, how much God loves us. "God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son" (Jn. iii, 16). God, as God, cannot suffer. But as the God-Man, having a nature like ours, He could suffer and did suffer, thus showing us by deeds His love for us. Suffering is the language which we readily understand. If a person suffers for us, we need not be told that he loves us. We know our mother loves us because, if need be, she will suffer for us even unto mortal agony. By the Incarnation of the Son of God and what it entailed, God's love was manifested to us in no dubious manner and in no slight degree. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. xv, 13).

If a king should become a beggar by clothing himself as a beggar, and living as a beggar and with

beggars, he would still be a king. The Son of God in a somewhat similar way became man, always, however, remaining God. In the one person, Jesus Christ, there are the two distinct and real natures—the divine and the human. Consequently when Christ suffered, it was God suffering in His human nature.

A man's soul cannot suffer from lack of food, because the soul is spiritual and requires no food. But the spirit of man—man himself,—a rational being—suffers when hunger pinches and the body craves nourishment. And so the Son of God was capable of suffering by and through His human nature, which was like unto ours in everything except sin. Hence the Son of God—the one person Christ, with the two natures, the divine and the human—endured for our sake, hunger, cold, privation, calumny, betrayal, torture and death.

Christ's human nature was the most perfect that Omnipotence could make it. As the God-Man, Christ was adorned with every quality which it was possible for a human being to receive. His soul was filled with sanctifying grace in a way impossible to any other human soul. His human mind, although not of infinite knowledge, surpassed in knowledge the combined knowledge of all learned men of all time.

The God-Man, therefore, is one person, Jesus Christ, in whom are the two natures—the divine and the human—substantially united. Christ is God from all eternity, but man only from the Incarnation.

It is important to bear in mind that although in Christ there are two natures, there is but one per-

son. If there were in Christ two persons, a divine person and a human person, it would be only a human person that suffered and died. Consequently it would be a man who suffered and atoned for us and we should not be redeemed at all. Even more, if in Christ there were two persons, it could not be said that God became man but only that He became intimately associated with man. But in becoming man, the Son of God assumed our nature and made it His own; so we may truly speak of the hands of God, the feet of God, the heart of God, the body of God, the Mother of God. Jesus said of Himself: "I and the Father are one" (Jn. x, 30). He did not mean one person, but one God. Two persons cannot be one person; but two or more persons may be one God, just as two natures may be in one person as the material and the spiritual in man, and the human and the divine in Christ.

Since Jesus Christ is only one person—the person of God the Son—it follows that as Mary is the Mother of Jesus Christ she is the Mother of God. This does not mean that she is the Mother of God as God, since God existed from all eternity, but, that she is the Mother of God as the God-Man Jesus Christ, whose existence began with the Incarnation.

Mary, although the most exalted of all creatures, is still only a creature. She is not divine. Between her and her divine Son there is the difference between creature and Creator. We worship God, but only venerate Mary. The saints, when they intercede with God for us, do so as His servants. When Mary speaks in our behalf she does so as the Mother

of God. In choosing Mary as the Mother of His only divine Son, the Eternal Father conferred upon her the greatest honor possible for a creature to receive.

We shall now briefly consider the Virgin Birth of Christ. What do we mean by the Virgin Birth? First of all it does not refer to the birth of Mary. It has no reference to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. It refers to the birth of Jesus and means that He was born of a virgin. This signifies that His conception and birth were miraculous; that He had no human father; that, instead, the power of God effected by a special act of omnipotence what ordinarily and naturally happens by human generation. In other words it was an exception to the natural law of human conception and birth.

Scripture narrates the conception of J  sus as follows:

“And in the sixth month, the Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the Angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought within herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the Angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the Angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and

the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Lk. i, 26-35).

The expression, "I know not man," was the Hebrew equivalent for the state of virginal chastity, and in this case implies a vow of perpetual virginity. The conception and birth of Jesus were therefore supernatural or miraculous. Some object to the dogma of the Virgin Birth because they reject whatever is miraculous. But Christ Himself was the greatest of miracles. His character, His deeds, His Resurrection—are all of the miraculous order. Reject miracles and you reject Christ, and Christianity, and Providence. The greatest proof of the miraculous is before our eyes in the existence of the Catholic Church. If she had not been supernaturally sustained she had perished long ago. Instead of growing feeble with the years she grows stronger.

We have seen that the Apostles' Creed states unequivocally that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born of a virgin, specifying her name: ". . . born of the Virgin Mary."

Christianity is a supernatural religion or nothing. Unless it is a revelation from on high, unless its Founder is divine, it is a sham. Being from above, it must have credentials from above. These credentials are the supernatural facts which are associated with it. Christianity had to show supernatural evidence or it never would have got a foothold in the world. Christ claimed to be God in the true sense. A tremendous claim. A supernatural claim. Supernatural evidence was necessary to substantiate this claim. Christianity without miracles would be like a

building without a foundation. A supernatural claim absolutely required supernatural proof. Hence, miracles were to be expected in the case of Christianity.

Those who reject the miraculous should reject Christ. He was a living miracle. His character and personality were such that the whole intellectual world has considered Him the most perfect being this world has known. Of all men He alone could point to Himself as a model of perfection: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (Mt. xi, 29). None but Him could challenge the world to find a fault in Him: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" (Jn. viii, 46).

Besides His personality, which so attracted men, there were His supernatural achievements or miracles. He gave sight to the blind, cleansed the leper, made the cripple whole, commanded the elements, raised the dead to life and foretold His ignominious death and glorious Resurrection. None but one accredited by the Almighty could do those things. He whom the Almighty approves of cannot be false, cannot be a misleader of mankind. We know, therefore, that Jesus Christ is a supernatural fact—a miracle.

Those who reject the Virgin Birth because it is supernatural, should reject Christ for the same reason. The main reason given for denying the Virgin Birth is that it is outside the course of nature. Of course it is. So is Christ. Instead of opposing a theory to a fact, the proper thing to do is to investigate the fact. If the fact be established the theory vanishes. If it can be shown that Christ was

born of a virgin, that His conception was effected without the agency of a human father, it demonstrates that the supernatural is a fact, and that any theory to the contrary is false.

It can be shown that the Virgin Birth was a fact. This can be done in the same way that we establish the fact of Cæsar's existence or the destruction of Jerusalem.

First of all, the Virgin Birth was foretold centuries before its occurrence. No one can foretell an event which is not dependent on fixed physical laws. Astronomers can foretell an eclipse, a chemist can foretell chemical reactions, a naturalist can foretell how a bird will build its nest. But the wisest man in the world cannot tell definitely what a group of men or an individual will do at some future time. Man may propose to be at a certain place or to be doing a certain thing at a specified day and hour, but the future may alter the best laid plans. So prophecy, which foretells the future concerning human affairs, is possible to the Omniscient God alone, or to one to whom He reveals the future. Therefore, prophecy fulfilled is God's seal on what the prophecy attests.

The Prophet Isaias foretold that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin. This knowledge could emanate from God alone. The Prophet spoke as follows: "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (Is. vii, 14). *Emmanuel* means *God with us*. The son here predicted was, therefore, to be the God-Man. In narrating the fact of the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus, the Evangelist St. Matthew points to the

event as a fulfillment of the prophecy: "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: *Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel*, which being interpreted is, *God with us*" (Mt. i, 22-23).

Instead, therefore, of being surprised that Christ was born of a virgin it would be a matter of surprise if He were not. Rather, if He were not born of a virgin He would not have been the Messiah. This shows the inconsistency of those who say that they are Christians yet reject the Virgin Birth. Either the Virgin Birth was a reality, or Christ was not what He proclaimed Himself to be. And if He were not what He professed to be He was the most criminal impostor the world has known, for His claims were the most stupendous ever made in the annals of mankind.

If the Virgin Birth be rejected because it is a miracle, Christian Revelation should be rejected on the same grounds. Christian Revelation claims to be from God, and, as such, is supernatural. It is conceivable that those who reject Christianity altogether, such as rationalists and materialists, should question the Virgin Birth; but how a person can be a Christian and question the Virgin Birth is a mystery. The fact is that those so-called Christians who question the Virgin Birth are drifting towards rationalism, if they have not already arrived at that destination.

Scripture is absolutely positive in its statements about the Virgin Birth. In the plainest language possible to man it declares the miraculous birth of

Jesus. It goes into detail in order that no one who accepts Scripture may have the slightest doubt of the supernatural conception and birth of Jesus. Let us read the Gospel account of the conception and birth of Jesus, and see if the facts could be more emphatically and unequivocally stated. The language is so clear that the only way to evade the Virgin Birth is to reject Scripture. The Gospel of St. Luke speaks as follows:

“And in the sixth month, the Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the Angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought within herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the Angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the Angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren: because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word. And the Angel departed from her” (Lk. i, 26-38).

In due time the Child was born as recorded by St. Luke in the following verses:

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem: because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them; and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for, this day, is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good-will” (Lk. ii, 4-14).

Two things are to be noted in this record: (1) that God sent the Angel Gabriel to a virgin, Mary —“The Angel Gabriel was sent from God . . . to a virgin . . . and the virgin’s name was Mary” (Lk. i, 26-27); (2) that Mary pleaded her virginity as an obstacle to motherhood, and from God’s angelic messenger received an answer: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the

Son of God . . . because no word shall be impossible with God" (Lk. i, 35, 37).

It is evident, therefore, that the Virgin Birth must be accepted as a fact or else Scripture considered a myth or fable. And it has come to that! Outside Christ's own Church the Bible is rapidly losing its supernatural character. It is gradually being put on the same level with the Koran of Mohammed or the Vedas of Brahma. Indeed, many preachers in various Christian churches regard the Bible much in the same light as they do the works of Dante or Shakespeare.

But the Bible is either the word of God or else a most fanciful and false narrative. The Bible teems with the supernatural. If the supernatural be impossible, the Bible teems with delusion. The Bible is not the Word of God but the word of Satan, if it be false. And it is false if the supernatural be false. It is false if the miraculous be false.

Rationalists are consistent at all events; but Christians who deny the Virgin Birth are not consistent. Protestantism was built on the foundation that the Bible was God's word. Those Christians, of whatever denomination, who deny the Virgin Birth should, if consistent, deny Christian Revelation and join the ranks of those who are aligned against Christ and His Church. It is surely coming to this. On all sides it has come to the point where the supernatural is the test of Christian belief.

The Virgin Birth is only a test case of the supernatural. Any other fact of Christ's life could be made the test just as well, for His whole life is a string of miraculous or supernatural events. If God

was to become man, what more fitting than that divine power should effect the tremendous accomplishment! This is the significance attached to the Virgin Birth. It means that the Incarnation was divinely effected. It means that God became man by a superhuman power. We should expect—rather than question—that mode of accomplishment.

But the truth of the matter is that denying the Virgin Birth is an attempt at undermining the whole Christian structure. The time is not far off when those who reject the Virgin Birth will reject Christ as the Son of God. When that comes to pass it will be the Catholic Church or paganism of some sort. The existence of Christ's own Church in the world today is evidence of the supernatural. This Church would have perished long ago unless it was upheld by Him who was born of the Virgin Mary. "And of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Lk. i, 33).

It was stated that the Virgin Birth could be investigated as any other fact of history. The Book that records it is either a true record or not. If it is a true record the Virgin Birth stands. If it be a false record let it be proven such. The most learned critics of the world are agreed that the Gospels are genuine and authentic. Since the Gospels are acknowledged genuine, the Virgin Birth therein recorded is a fact.

When, therefore, the Apostles' Creed states that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary it proclaims the truth as declared by God Himself. "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

Christianity is as true or false as the Virgin Birth. The Catholic Church stands or falls with the Virgin Birth. Christ's own Church must always teach the Virgin Birth. No Church that even questions the Virgin Birth can be Christ's own Church.

In honoring God's Mother we are honoring Himself, for He is the Author of all that she is and has. In Catholic devotion the Mother of Christ is always linked with Christ Himself. God came to us through Mary. Surely we may go to Him through her. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

CHAPTER X

THE REDEMPTION

THE Apostles' Creed proclaims that the Son of God, made man, "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried." This truth is a historic fact. Pontius Pilate was the Roman Governor of Judea under the Emperor Tiberius. He was Governor for the space of ten years—A.D. 26 to 36. Both Tertullian and Justin Martyr, who lived in the second century, refer to the document sent by Pilate to Tiberius, reporting the trial, condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus. This fact is mentioned in order to show that Christianity belongs not to the mythical, but to a historic period. Buddhism, Brahminism, Confucianism, and other Eastern cults have their origin in hazy, distant ages which makes it virtually impossible to distinguish fact from fancy. But Christianity has its origin in the period of classic literature characterized by the greatest historians, critics, poets and rulers that the world has known.

The Gospels were written at a time when every document was submitted to the closest scrutiny. The Jews themselves were the keenest critics of the age and moreover hostile to Christ and His Church. Not even the Jews ever called in question the facts of the Gospels. Unless everything recorded in the

Gospels was fact, the critical Jews would have been the first to challenge their veracity. This they never did, although it would have been the easiest and quickest way to destroy Christianity. They did not question the Gospels because what was recorded therein had been witnessed by multitudes living at the time when they were written. If they could not have been controverted by the Jews who lived at the time, it was because it was impossible to do so.

When the Jewish council forbade the Apostles to preach Jesus, it did not do so because what they preached could be called in question, but to silence them from proclaiming the words and deeds of Christ.

“And it came to pass that their princes, and ancients, and scribes, were gathered together in Jerusalem; and Annas the high priest, and Caiphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest. . . . and they conferred among themselves, saying: . . . It is manifest, and we cannot deny it; but that it may be no farther spread among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak no more in this name to any man. And calling them, they charged them not to speak at all, nor to teach in the name of Jesus” (Acts iv, 5-18).

If the Gospels ever could have been discredited it would have been by the keen Jewish critics who did all in their power to destroy Christianity. The origin of Christianity was in such an unfavorable environment, and under such forbidding circumstances that unless it was the absolute truth it had never survived.

It was under the Roman Governor of Judea—Pontius Pilate, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

made man, suffered and was crucified. The passion and death of Jesus Christ are as well and better attested than the victories of Cæsar or the conquests of Alexander. If we reject the Gospels' record of Christ's passion and death we must reject every record of the past, for no ancient record approaches the Gospels for genuineness and authenticity.

It may be asked: Why, then, did the Jews put Jesus to death? They could find no fault in Him. Never was man followed and scrutinized so closely as Jesus, yet no charge could be found against Him. The Jews affirmed that never did man speak with the authority, composure and keen intelligence which Jesus manifested. His very enemies finally desisted from questioning Him because they were always put to rout and shame by His answers. They even brought false witnesses to testify against Him only to find their testimony discredited by their own contradictions. "And the chief priests and all the council sought for evidence against Jesus, that they might put Him to death, and found none. For many bore false witness against Him, and their evidences were not agreeing" (Mk. xiv, 55-56). Why, then, did they put Him to death?

In a word it was because His kingdom was not of this world. They wanted a worldly, not a spiritual kingdom. They wanted a ruler who would enable them to throw off the hated yoke of the pagan Roman conquerors. They wanted a king who would make their nation powerful and glorious among the peoples of the earth. They had interpreted the prophecies which referred to the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah to refer to a worldly and temporal

kingdom. They distorted Scripture into what they themselves wanted. They overlooked the prophecies, so frequently repeated, that the Messiah was to be a Redeemer; that on Him was to be laid the iniquity of us all; and that by His bruises we were to be healed. They confused His first coming in lowliness with His second coming in glory and power to judge the living and the dead. They distorted His spiritual reign which was to embrace the whole world and to last for all time, into a material sway which was to make them the lords of the earth.

And all this they did because they were actuated by pride and blinded by passion. They chose from Scripture only what suited them, with the result that they fashioned their own messiah, and because Christ was not to their design rejected and crucified Him. Time and again they wished to make Him king, but as His kingdom was not of this world He fled from their honors. "Jesus, therefore, when He knew that they would come to take Him by force, and make Him king, fled again into the mountain Himself alone" (Jn. vi, 15).

There are many today who reject Christ as did the Scribes and the Pharisees because He does not give them what they want. They would accept Christ if He preached self-indulgence, but because He preaches self-mastery, self-control, self-denial they will have none of Him. It is safe to say that if the religion of Jesus Christ proclaimed what the passions of mankind dictated He would be acclaimed Lord by all the world. But because He declares that life is probation, and that our passions are to be controlled by His holy laws, men today turn from

Him as did the Scribes and the Pharisees of old. Before we condemn those who condemned Jesus let us look into our own hearts and see if we have not too often preferred Barabbas to Christ.

Our Saviour, as we have seen, was both God and man in the one person, Jesus Christ. As God He could not suffer; as mere man He could not adequately atone for the sins of mankind against the infinite majesty of Almighty God. As the God-Man He could suffer in His humanity and dignify His suffering by His divine personality. As God-Man Jesus could adequately atone for the sins of the world. Jesus is called *our Redeemer* because He makes it possible for every one who has lost the favor of God to regain it. He might have redeemed us by a word or a single deed of humanity, but He chose to do so by suffering. Suffering is the language of love. Nothing so wins our hearts as suffering endured for our sakes. Christ wanted to win our love, because if we love Him we shall keep His Commandments, and if we keep His Commandments we shall share His everlasting glory and love.

The Scribes and the Pharisees realizing that the whole nation was following after Jesus, called a council and declared that they must do away with Him or else lose their prestige and power. Christ, finding that the Scribes and the Pharisees would not be converted, had warned the people against them. This embittered these unscrupulous leaders all the more against Him. He declared that they were false teachers, hypocrites, like unto whited sepulchres, blind leaders, consumed with pride and the lust of power. So they perceived that if Christ

prevailed they would be discredited. "What do we," they said, "for this man doth many miracles? If we let Him alone so, all will believe in Him. . . . From that day therefore they devised to put Him to death" (Jn. xi, 47-53). It cannot be said that the Scribes and the Pharisees sinned through ignorance. They admitted Christ's miracles, but closed their eyes to what these divine deeds signified. The wish was father to the thought. They did not want to surrender their power nor amend their lives, so they planned to reject and destroy the Saviour, by judicial murder, if necessary.

They haled Jesus before the tribunal of Pontius Pilate. They would have put Him to death themselves were He not so prominent a personage, as later they stoned Stephen to death. But the Roman Tribunal alone had power to judge in matters of life and death. So they led Jesus bound to Pilate, and falsely accused Him of trying to start a revolt and make Himself king. "And when morning was come, all the chief priests and ancients of the people took counsel against Jesus, that they might put Him to death. And they brought Him bound, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor" (Mt. xxvii, 1-2). They knew this was a false charge, for when they tried to make Him king, He spurned the crown. Pilate, too, saw that the charge was false. "For Pilate knew that for envy they had delivered Him" (Mt. xxvii, 18). Then they accused Him of blasphemy because, they said He made Himself to be the Son of God, equal to God. "The Jews answered Pilate: We have a law; and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself

the Son of God" (Jn. xix, 7). Jesus did not deny this accusation but affirmed that He was indeed God; adding, "But My kingdom is not of this world" (Jn. xviii, 36).

Pilate realized that Jesus was innocent of all crime and sought to release Him: "And Pilate again spoke to the Jews, desiring to release Jesus" (Lk. xxiii, 20). But the Scribes and the Pharisees, by the vilest propaganda in the history of the world, instigated the multitude to cry out for the death of Jesus. "But the chief priests and ancients persuaded the people, that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away" (Mt. xxvii, 20). "Crucify Him; crucify Him," rang out from the fickle multitude which a few days before had acclaimed Him the Messiah as He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem after the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. "A great multitude that was come to the festival day, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried: Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the king of Israel" (Jn. xii, 12-13).

Pilate was afraid of an insurrection. He feared He would lose His governorship if disorder arose, and a riot followed. Loving power more than justice, he disgraced his judicial office by publicly proclaiming Jesus innocent yet sentencing Him to death. "And Pilate, calling together the chief priests, and the magistrates, and the people, said to them: You have presented unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people; and behold I, having examined Him before you, find no cause in this man, in those things

wherein you accuse Him. No, nor Herod neither. For I sent you to him, and behold, nothing worthy of death is done to Him. I will chastise Him therefore, and release Him. . . . But the Jews were instant with loud voices, requiring that He might be crucified; and their voices prevailed. And Pilate *gave sentence* that it should be as they required . . . and Jesus was delivered up to their will." (Lk. xxiii, 13-25). It is the only instance in the history of mankind when a judge pronounced the accused innocent and nevertheless sentenced him to death.

The Jews had decreed the death of Jesus before they led Him to Pilate. They forced Pilate to pronounce the sentence which they had previously formulated. Jesus was led like a lamb to the slaughter. He opened not His mouth. He let passion work out its evil course as He does with sinners today. He was fulfilling the prophecies made concerning Him centuries before: "He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth. He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter" (Is. liii, 7).

They placed on His bleeding shoulders the cross on which He was to be nailed. Arrived on Calvary they drove the spikes through His hands and feet into the wood of the cross, thus again fulfilling prophecy: "They have dug My hands and My feet" (Ps. xxi, 17). As He hung upon the cross, a mass of wounds from His thorn-crowned head to His pierced feet, as it were a worm and not a man, He was the fulfillment of the prophet's vision of the Redeemer:

"There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness: and we have seen Him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of Him: despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and His look *was* as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed" (Is. liii, 2-5).

Thus did Christ redeem mankind. Thus did He become *our Saviour*. From what did He save us? Surely the consequences of sin must be something dreadful when, to save us, the God-Man thus suffered and sacrificed His life for us. Christ Himself said: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Mt. xvi, 26). Salvation, therefore, is of more consequence than the whole world.

The Creed states that Jesus Christ was crucified. This was the most dreadful form of death that could be inflicted. Because of its ignominy and torments it was reserved for criminals of the worst type. It was so degrading that it could not be inflicted on Roman citizens. It was the punishment of slaves and of the conquered. This is the death that Christ submitted to in atonement for sin.

Atonement means *reparation for some offense or insult*. Christ's atonement was for sin. Sin is an offense against God. God as Creator is the Lord and Ruler of Creation. We are subjects of God much more than any people are subjects of an earthly government. Human governments protect life and

property, but God has given us life and property. He is the Author of life, and the Maker of the world. As creatures we are subjects of the Creator. Consequently He has a right to our service. Service is given by doing the will of another. Hence Christ sums up our duty to God by telling us that God's will should be done by us: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt. vi, 10).

God could compel us to do His will if He wished, but He has seen fit to make us free, and having given us free will He respects it, and will not force it. By physical laws God obliges the firmament and all the material forces of the world to do His will. But He wants man to serve Him freely, in accordance with his nature. He gave man free will in order that man might have the privilege and merit of freely serving Him. Free will is God's greatest gift to men. But with the gift goes the responsibility of using it right. For man, if he choose, may use his free will to offend God rather than to serve God. That is sin—using God's greatest gift against Him.

As a creature man is subject to the Creator. When a man refuses to do the will of the Creator he equivalently says to God: "*Not* Thy will be done, but my will be done!" If a subject of a worldly power did that he would be punished as a violator of the law, as an offender against the majesty of the government. An offense is measured by the dignity of the one who is offended. If a man strike a fellow-man it is an offense and an insult. But if a criminal should strike a judge the offense would be greater. But what an insult and offense would it be for a subject to strike a king! It is clear that

in such a case the offender would not have it in his own power to offer adequate reparation.

Sin is an offense against God. It is an insult to the infinite majesty of the Monarch of mankind. Sin is the refusal of the insignificant creature to submit to the infinite Creator. Since an offense takes its magnitude from the dignity of the one offended, and since sin offends the infinite majesty of God, it is evident that sin is an offense of such magnitude that reparation for it is something beyond the capacity of finite man.

This is why God became man. As God, Christ was infinite; as man he was, though sinless, one of us. God *as God* could not suffer. Man *as man* could not offer infinite reparation, since the best of mankind is but a finite being. The Son of God, by assuming human nature, became in the person of Christ the God-Man. As God-Man He was infinite and also capable of atoning. As God-Man the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, was thus able to offer infinite reparation for sin. And that is what He did by Redemption. By His passion and death He not only atoned for sin, but also gave evidence of His love for us, winning in consequence the ardent love of the best of mankind.

It is not for us to say in what manner God should require atonement for sin. It is His affair. It is sufficient for us to know that in point of fact the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man, suffered and died for us. Redemption on such a scale shows us the nature of sin, and also the extent of God's love. Sin must be a dreadful thing since God atoned for it by such a redemption. And God's love for us

must be greater than we can measure since He sacrificed the life of His only Son for us. Redemption, therefore, restored to us the favor of God of which sin had deprived us, and also furnished us with the noblest and most efficacious motive for loyal service to Him. Christ might have redeemed us by a word or a sigh. That might have satisfied divine justice, but not divine love. By the Redemption we know that not only are we forgiven but that we are also loved. What a wonderful thing it is to be loved by the King of Time and Eternity—by the Lord of Heaven and Earth! The passion of Christ thus not only blotted out the stain of guilt from our souls, but it furthermore gave us the greatest incentive possible for avoiding sin. Fear may make us do difficult and repugnant things; but love can make us do the impossible.

The Redemption is God's proof that He loves us, and that He wants our love. "God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son" (Jn. iii, 16). The only begotten Son, made man, proved His love from Bethlehem to Calvary. Christ was born in a stable and died on a cross—all for our sake. In return He asks our love: "My son, give Me thy heart" (Prov. xxiii, 26). Christ showed His love for us by becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. In like manner we must show our love for Him by obedience to His law. "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn. xiv, 15).

Every one would love God if it did not imply service and sacrifice. Sacrifice is the language of love. By sacrifice Christ proclaimed His love for us. In the same language we must declare our love for

Him. "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. vii, 21). God who made us without our coöperation, will not save us without our coöperation. God has done His part for our salvation. The rest rests with ourselves. God offers us Redemption; but we must take it on His terms. "To as many as receive Him, to them He gives the power to become the sons of God" (Jn. i, 12).

Our destiny, as proclaimed by Almighty God, is to become members of the divine family. What a glorious prospect for man! Indeed, with our final end in view life takes on the character of a great and noble adventure whose objective is participation in the very life of God. Hence the Apostle, addressing all mankind, says: "Grace to you and peace be accomplished in the knowledge of God and of Christ Jesus our Lord. . . . By whom He hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. i, 2-4).

Redemption not only repairs man's transgressions but also gives to him the power to become in a measure like unto God. It is thus that God draws good out of evil. Our first parents transgressed because they would be like unto God, as the tempter falsely assured them they should be, if they did his bidding rather than that of God. What Satan falsely proclaimed to Eve, that God has truly declared unto mankind. We may be like unto God by doing the will of God. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done"

(Mt. vi, 10). Doing God's will makes us to be the children of God—heirs to the kingdom of heaven.

Now we know why Christ said: "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mk. viii, 37). God as He was, He could name nothing that approached the soul in value. Redemption, therefore, means salvation. Redemption means everlasting life and happiness. Redemption is proof of God's love for us, and a pledge that if we love Him in return, He will be ours for all eternity in that kingdom He has prepared for those who love Him.

CHAPTER XI

THE RESURRECTION

AFTER stating the fact of Christ's passion and death, the Apostles' Creed says: "The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty."

Christ foretold His Resurrection from the dead. The Resurrection was accordingly not only a great miracle of itself, but also a wonderful miracle of prophecy.

Christ Himself gave the Resurrection as the great proof of His divine mission. He said, on being asked for a sign:

"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights: so shall the son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights" (Mt. xii, 30).

This was, therefore, the sign that Our Lord Himself gave in proof of His divine mission.

On several occasions Christ gave specific details of His Resurrection. Speaking of His passion He foretold that the Jews "shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified, and the third day He shall rise again" (Mt. xx, 19).

Only God can foretell the free actions of men. Scientists can predict the future with regard to things which are governed by fixed laws, as, for instance, the position and motion of the planets, the reactions of chemical elements, the times and degree of tides, etc. But no one can predict the future actions of men of free will, much less of a body of men. A man cannot predict with certainty his own future actions. Only God Almighty knows the future actions of creatures endowed with free will. Hence, when Christ foretold minutely the fact of the Resurrection, it was a divine prediction.

Christ's prophecy of His Resurrection was well known to the Jews. After the crucifixion the Jewish leaders went to Pilate to obtain Roman soldiers for a guard over the tomb of Jesus, giving as their reason the fact that He had said that on the third day after His death He was to rise again. So the prophecy was public and well known.

The precautions which the Jews took in order to prevent the Resurrection proved to be the best evidence for the fact of the Resurrection. The Roman guards on duty at the tomb were blinded by the heavenly glory that shone round the sepulchre on the morn of the third day, and in amazement and terror were struck dumb and thrown to the ground. They reported the Resurrection to the Jewish council, but, as in the case of the resurrection of Lazarus, it only served to embitter them.

"Behold some of the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all things that had been done. And the chief priests being assembled together with the ancients, taking counsel, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers,

saying: Say you, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away when we were asleep. And if the governor shall hear of this, we will persuade him and secure you. So they taking the money, did as they were taught: and this word was spread abroad among the Jews even unto this day" (Mt. xxviii, 11-15).

These leaders were not looking for truth, nor for evidence of the truth. Carried away by passion they were blind to evidence, just as some people are to-day blind with regard to the evidence of Christ's own Church.

The Resurrection is as true or as false as Christianity. It is impossible, logically, to accept Christianity and to deny the Resurrection. Both go together; and for this reason—that Christ made it the test-sign of the truth of His mission, and the Apostles afterwards made it the basis of their preaching.

The very first sermon of St. Peter—the first sermon preached in the Church of Christ—dealt almost entirely with the Resurrection.

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him, in the midst of you, as you also know. . . . you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. . . . This Jesus hath God raised again, whereof all we are witnesses” (Acts ii, 22-32).

These words were spoken in the very city where Jesus was crucified and to the people who had participated in His death.

“Now when they had heard these things, they had compunction in their heart, and said to Peter, and to the rest

of the Apostles: What shall we do, men and brethren? But Peter said to them: Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins. . . . They therefore that received his word, were baptized; and there were added in that day about three thousand souls" (Acts ii, 37-41).

The Resurrection was the theme of the first sermon of Christianity. In consequence of it, three thousand converts to the Faith resulted.

Shortly afterwards Peter, on being asked for an alms by a cripple, said:

"Silver and gold I have none; but what I have, I give thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise, and walk. . . . and he leaping up, stood, and walked. . . . and all the people saw him walking and praising God. . . . and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him. . . . But Peter seeing, made answer to the people: Ye men of Israel, why wonder you at this? . . . The Author of Life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. . . . and the Faith which is by Him, hath given this man perfect soundness in the sight of you all" (Acts iii, 6-16).

As a result of this miracle and this sermon on the Resurrection, five thousand more converts were added to the infant Church of Christ. But as in the case of the resurrection of Lazarus, the Jewish leaders instead of being converted by the miracles and preaching of the Apostles, were only hardened in their opposition. They were like parties to a lawsuit, who, in spite of evidence, refuse to see anything they do not want to see. Prejudice is a dreadful thing. It made the Jews say: "Can anything of good come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. i, 46). And it

now makes people of a certain type say: "Can anything of good come out of the Catholic Church?" That is why a fair mind is necessary if one wishes to examine rightly into the claims of Christ's own Church.

After the conversion of the five thousand by the preaching of the Resurrection, the Jews held a council, and decided by all means to stop the Apostles from preaching the Resurrection. Instead of examining the evidence for the Resurrection, and instead of meeting the arguments of the Apostles, the council did what passion ordinarily does when it has the power to carry out its impulses—it rushed headlong, and ordered the arrest of the Apostles.

"And setting the Apostles in their midst, they asked: By what power, or by what name, have you done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them: Ye princes of the people, and ancients, hear: If we this day are examined concerning the good deed done to the infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole; be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by Him this man standeth here before you whole. . . .

"Now seeing the constancy of Peter and of John, understanding that they were illiterate and ignorant men, they wondered. . . . and they conferred among themselves, saying: What shall we do to these men? for indeed a known miracle hath been done by them, to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; it is manifest, and we cannot deny it. But that it may be no farther spread among the people, let us threaten them that they speak no more in this name to any man.

"And calling them, they charged them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answering, said to them: If it be just in the sight of God,

to hear you rather than God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts iv, 7-20).

How different that attitude of the Apostles from their cowardly conduct before the descent of the Holy Ghost! Notice also that they were known as illiterate and ignorant men. This was charged against them. Yet here they were preaching the Resurrection so persuasively that, as a consequence of one discourse, five thousand men changed their whole outlook on life.

What kept the Jewish council from conversion? The same thing that keeps many people from being members of Christ's own Church today. The council did not deny the miracle of the cure of the cripple but sought to hush it up. This is done today with regard to miracles in Christ's own Church. A rationalist, having witnessed a marvelous cure at Lourdes, was asked if that did not convince him that God was approving the Church which Lourdes represented? His reply was that he would not believe in miracles if he saw a thousand cures. Of course, to people of that frame of mind evidence and argument are useless.

The answer of the Apostles to the council was to go on preaching the resurrection in spite of threats.

"And with great power did the Apostles give testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord; and great grace was in them all. . . . And the high priest rising up, and all they that were with him were filled with envy. And they laid hands on the Apostles, and put them in the common prison. . . . and they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying: Commanding we commanded

you, that you should not teach in this name; and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine. . . . But Peter and the Apostles answering, said: We ought to obey God, rather than men. The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom you put to death. . . . And we are witnesses of these things. . . .

"When they had heard these things, they were *cut to the heart*, and they thought to put the Apostles to death. . . . And calling in the Apostles, after they had scourged them, they charged them that they should not speak at all in the name of Jesus; and they dismissed them. And they indeed went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproaches for the name of Jesus. And every day they ceased not in the temple, and from house to house, to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts iv, 33; v, 17-42).

And so it went on—the Apostles suffering scourging, prison, exile and death, for preaching the Resurrection. Truly they were egregious fools to testify to the Resurrection if it were not a reality. What had they to gain? Nothing but ignominy and torture.

We have, therefore, the spectacle of twelve illiterate men, who previously were timid and ignorant, standing before the learned of the people and confounding them by their learning and courage. If their mission was true, the change in them was comprehensible and even to be expected. If their mission were not true, the change in them would have been a greater miracle than what they preached.

Moreover, the conversion of the pagan world to Christianity by the preaching of the Resurrection is even a greater miracle than the transformation of the Apostles, and the Resurrection itself. Either divine power was back of this conversion or it was not. If divine power was back of it, the divinity of

Christianity and the truth of the Resurrection are manifest. If divine power were not back of it, we have a greater thing than the Resurrection to explain. For the conversion of the Roman Empire to Catholicity without the Resurrection is something more inexplicable than the Resurrection.

Men may proclaim a fraud for gain, but not for loss, ignominy, torture and death. The constancy and heroism of the Apostles are incompatible with imposture. Nor were they under a delusion. The greatest preachers and missionaries of all time were not the victims of hallucination. The Apostles were rocks of common sense, as is evident from the Gospels. They were men of neither imagination nor theory. Yet, by the power of God, they were instantly transformed from illiterate, timid men into the most exalted and sublime preachers that this world has known, and into the most courageous missionaries recorded in history. And all this was in confirmation of their mission.

The Apostles preached Christ crucified and risen from the dead. If the Apostles did not know the truth about Christ—who did? If they were wrong in preaching the Resurrection, the sooner revealed religion is branded false, the better! Deny the Resurrection if you will—but deny Christ also. We cannot accept Christ and at the same time reject the Resurrection.

But the Resurrection is a fact—even apart from Revelation it finds evidence in history. Without the Resurrection, the establishment of Christianity was impossible—Christianity is a fact of history. Without the Resurrection the constancy of the martyrs

was impossible—the combats and victories of the martyrs are matter of history. Without the Resurrection the Church of the Catacombs was an impossibility—the Church of the Catacombs is a fact of history. Without the Resurrection the survival of the Church through the persecutions of the first three centuries was a matter of impossibility—the persecutions of the first three centuries and the survival of the Church are attested by the best historical documents known to mankind.

The Apostles in their preaching of the religion of Jesus Christ laid great stress on the fact of the Resurrection. They went so far as to say that unless Jesus rose from the dead they were criminal deceivers. Listen to St. Paul: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again. And if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God" (I Cor. xv, 13-15).

The Apostle furthermore states that faith in Jesus is a dead loss if the Resurrection be not a fact. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now Christ is risen from the dead" (I Cor. xv, 19-20). He goes on to state that it is faith in Christ's Resurrection that sustains him in the severe ordeals of the Apostolic ministry. "Why are we in danger every hour? I die daily . . . what doth it profit me, if the dead rise not again? *Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die*" (I Cor. xv, 30-32).

The Apostles were men like ourselves. They loved life and the good things of life as much as we do. They were as keen and sceptical as people of today.

They did not follow Jesus blindly. Christ and His cause had ended with Calvary unless He rose from the dead.

The Apostles and the early Christians did not incur the loss of property, liberty and life for a fairy tale. Every one of the Apostles suffered imprisonment, stripes, exile and death for faith in the Resurrection. Nor were they credulous. Just the opposite. No one could be harder to convince than was the Apostle Thomas. When informed by the other Apostles that they had seen the Risen Saviour, he said to them: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe" (Jn. xx, 25). That does not look like credulity.

The Apostles had no motive for preaching Christ's Resurrection unless it was a fact. Preaching the Resurrection was pronouncing their own death sentence, for they all died a martyr's death for witnessing to the Resurrection. People are willing to believe in a thing on slight proof if it bring them fame or fortune. But no one will believe in what occasions suffering, poverty and disgrace unless the proof be overwhelming. The Apostles were as sane as any body of men in history. No sane man will preach a doctrine which will cost him his life unless he is persuaded that what he preaches is absolutely true. The Apostles preached the Resurrection in face of threats, scourging and cruel death. Those who believed in them and became Christians were as hard to convince as were the Apostles themselves. The multitudes who believed in the Resurrection and

died for their belief certainly must have had convincing reasons for their belief.

The establishment of Christianity was the most stupendous innovation in the annals of mankind. It was the greatest revolution that this world has seen. The world's motto was self-indulgence—Christ's was self-denial. The world's object of existence was pleasure—Christ's was duty. The world proclaimed that the grave was the end of man—Christ declared that the grave was not the goal but starting point of man. The world's principle of living was: "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we shall die."—Christ's was: "After death, the judgment."

Christ's teaching was the reverse of that of the pagan world of His day. To establish Christianity in that world was an impossibility without the Resurrection. St. Augustine aptly says: "The establishment of Christianity without the Resurrection would be a greater miracle than the Resurrection itself."

Furthermore, unless the Resurrection was a fact the Apostles never could have convinced the world of it. They were not learned men; they had little or no influence or prestige; they were, for the most part, very ordinary men of the peasant type. They came from a nation and race despised by the Roman world. They had no worldly inducements to offer. On the contrary, belief in the doctrine which they preached demanded of the pagans the renunciation of what was dearest to them. Yet in thousands, and hundreds of thousands, they flocked to the standard of the Crucified.

This has no parallel in history. Every other re-

ligion which effected a foothold in this world offered mankind various and many inducements. Christianity offered none this side of the grave. On the contrary it stated that life was probation and that on its conduct here depend eternal consequences hereafter. It proclaimed that life itself must be sacrificed, if need be, for professing and practising the precepts of Christ.

The basis for all this exalted manner of life was the Resurrection. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Cor. xv, 19). But because of the Resurrection the Apostles and the early Christians were of all men the most blessed. They had that peace of knowing that they were the friends of God, and, that where Jesus was in glory, there they would be if they continued faithful to Him.

The Apostles saw the Risen Lord with their own eyes.

"When it was late the same day, the first day of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when He had said this, He shewed them His hands and His side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. . . . Now Thomas, one of the twelve . . . was not with them when Jesus came. . . .

"After eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then He saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side. . . . Thomas said to Him: My Lord, and my God" (Jn. xx, 19-28).

If the Resurrection were not a fact what motive could the Apostles have had in proclaiming it? It brought them nothing but contempt and chains and stripes. And yet they proclaimed it, and millions accepted it, at a time when acceptance meant the loss of goods, the loss of home, the loss of life. Unless the proofs of the Resurrection were incontestable there is no explanation of the faith of the early Christians in the religion of Jesus Christ.

There is no fact of history better attested than the Resurrection. First of all we have the document which records it—the Gospels—the most reliable record of history. Then we have the establishment of the Church of Christ built on the fact of the Resurrection. Besides there are the thousand-and-one witnesses of antiquity, such as tablets, manuscripts, monuments, the catacombs, and, above all, the constant living testimony from the very day of the Resurrection.

The Jews never denied the Resurrection although they forbade its proclamation. It may be asked: Why were not the Jews converted if they did not deny the Resurrection? To this it may be replied: Why did they not become converted after the resurrection of Lazarus which they not only could not deny but publicly admitted? They not only admitted the resurrection of Lazarus, but as we read in the Gospel of St. John, they planned to kill him because he was living evidence of the power of Christ and incontrovertible proof of the divine claims of Christ.

“A great multitude of the Jews knew that Lazarus was there; and they came. . . . that they might see him, whom

Christ had raised from the dead. But the chief priests thought to kill Lazarus also, because many of the Jews, by reason of him went away, and believed in Jesus" (Jn. xii, 9-11).

Evidence is for those who want the truth, not for those who thrive on error. Conviction is not conversion. Many people are convinced of what is right, but fail to do what is right. Passion blinds. The wish is father to the thought. A person committed to an evil course is not easily dissuaded from pursuing it. That is why Christ so frequently warned the people against the Scribes and the Pharisees who were so deeply consumed by pride and envy that they were denounced by Him as blind and unscrupulous leaders.

Until recently all Christians believed in the Resurrection. But today some who style themselves Christians—but are so in name only—regard the Resurrection as a parable only, or a symbol of spiritual regeneration. But the millions of Christians who during the first three centuries went to torments and death for faith in the Resurrection, did not consider it a parable nor a symbol. For them it was a pledge of the resurrection to immortal glory of those who lived by the teaching of the Risen Christ. Christ's kingdom had ended on Calvary, unless He had risen from the dead.

The Resurrection is objected to by some on the grounds that it is a miracle—a supernatural occurrence. Of course it is a miracle. So is the spiritual kingdom of Christ which is founded upon it a miracle. The establishment of Christianity is a decided miracle. The continuance of the Church of

Christ is a miracle. The unity and universality of the Catholic Church is a miracle. That an organization has weathered the storms and upheavals of twenty centuries, and is today unimpaired or rather more vigorous than in its youth is proof positive of supernatural support and guidance.

They who deny the supernatural must close their eyes to the perpetual youth of Christ's Church, the only institution in the world whose years make her not old nor decrepit but stronger and greater. It is hard to maintain a family in unity with the passing of the years. Harder still is it to hold a social organization together even though its membership be limited in number and locality. But to keep intact a society which extends to every part and people of the world, and to do this without the employment of force and without concession to human weakness, is possible to divine power alone.

The wonder is not that the Resurrection is a miracle, but that normal intelligence could regard it as otherwise than a miracle, seeing that it is the foundation of the greatest of all miracles—the perpetual and universal Church of Jesus Christ. No natural foundation could uphold a structure of such proportions. And when we consider that all through the ages the world has been arrayed against this Church—against Christ's own Church—the wonder grows that any one can contemplate her without beholding Almighty God as her prop and stay.

Of course the Resurrection is a miracle. Deny the possibility of a miracle and you deny the greatest and most permanent fact of history—the perpetual existence of the Catholic Church. Deny the Resur-

rection and how explain the conversion of St. Paul, which is a historic fact? Saul, the persecutor, became Paul, the Apostle. He set out to destroy the religion of Christ, and ended by becoming its greatest champion. Through faith in the Resurrection he sustained labors and trials which no human being could otherwise have survived.

It was faith in the Resurrection that made little children and frail women endure, unflinchingly and cheerfully, torments which would have made strong men quail. For three hundred years, to be a Christian almost meant to be a martyr. Yet in multitudes the worldly pagans turned to the standard of Christ and eventually made the pagan Roman Empire Christian.

Let some man or society endeavor today to change the life and beliefs and customs and morals of a whole people and see how far he will proceed, especially if no worldly inducements be offered for conversion. The Apostles, preaching the Resurrection, converted the pagan to a Christian world. To one who knows human nature no further argument should be necessary to establish the truth of the Resurrection.

No institution which has done for mankind what Christianity has done could be founded on a lie. If the Resurrection be not a fact it is the most stupendous lie of history. If the Resurrection be not a fact God is responsible for a lie, for He has put His divine seal on the Resurrection by upholding the edifice reared on the foundation of the Resurrection.

The continuance of the Church of Christ in the world is as great a miracle as the Resurrection. The

wisest and greatest men and nations of history have not been able without force or favor to perpetuate their work beyond a few centuries at most. But the Church of Christ has been in the world the past twenty centuries and is still in her vigorous youth. She is daily fulfilling the prophecy of the angelic messenger to the Mother of God: "Of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Lk. i, 33).

The fact of the Resurrection should not surprise us. Rather the establishment of Christianity without the Resurrection should surprise us. Again let us hear St. Augustine—"The establishment of Christianity without the Resurrection would be a greater miracle than the Resurrection itself."

The Resurrection, therefore, is true. And Christ's own Church—founded on the Risen Christ, and the living witness to the Resurrection—is true. Modernism—a child of Protestantism—denies the Resurrection. Protestantism began by denying that Christ's authority was in His own Church. It is ending by denying Christ Himself, stripping Him of everything supernatural, reducing Him to the level of Plato or Confucius, and making His religion a mere human cult.

The martyrs in millions did not die for faith in a human creed. Unless the Catholic Creed—the Creed of Christ's own Church—is the absolute truth, Christ was the cruelest personage of history, for millions of the world's best have suffered loss of possessions, liberty and life for His Creed. But the Creed of Christ is true. They who died for it did indeed lose life, but Christ said, "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel, shall save it" (Mk.

viii, 35). Therefore, now in glory, they rejoice that they witnessed to Christ even in their blood. "Every one that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven" (Mt. x, 32).

We may not be called upon *to die* for Christ, as were the martyrs—but, as His followers, we are called upon *to live* for Him. And if we live *for* Him here, we shall live *with* Him hereafter.

CHAPTER XII

CHRIST—THE JUDGE OF ALL MANKIND

AFTER stating that Jesus Christ gave His life for the redemption of mankind, the Apostles' Creed declares that He rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, and that "thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead." This is the truth which Jesus Christ Himself announced to the world when He said: "The Son of man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat of His majesty; and all nations shall be gathered together before Him. . . . Then shall He say to them that shall be on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom. . . . Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand: Depart from Me, ye cursed" (Mt. xxv, 31-41).

Christ not only proclaimed that He was to be the Universal Judge, but moreover stated the real nature of man's life on earth—"The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels: and then will He render to every man according to his works" (Mt. xvi, 27).

Man's life here below is a probation. The grave does not end all. It simply marks the initial stage of

man's immortality. But on this first stage of life's journey depends eternal welfare or reprobation. Christ was very insistent on the fact of judgment. He impressed upon His followers that they had not here a lasting abode, nor one which would terminate with mortal life. If there is one thing which Christ makes clear it is that man is responsible to a Power above for his conduct in life. Man may deceive his fellow-man, he may escape the consequences of wrongdoing for the short period of mortal life, but the eternal day is before him, and on that day he must stand before his Maker to render an account of his stewardship.

Christ tells us why He is to be the Universal Judge. "The Father hath given all judgment to the Son, that all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father. . . . He hath given Him power to do judgment, because He is the Son of man" (Jn. v, 22-27).

Jesus became man in order to be our Saviour. He gave His life for our eternal welfare. He specified what we must do to attain everlasting life. It was fitting therefore that He who had opened the gates of unending bliss to mankind should be the Judge of those who should pass through them. Moreover, by becoming man the Son of God had submitted to an infinite humiliation. It was but right that as God-Man He should be so exalted: "That all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father" (Jn. v, 23).

As we shall see when we consider the Blessed Trinity, the three persons—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost—are equal in all things. The Gospel

makes this clear when it states that "In the beginning was the Word [Jesus Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . all things were made by Him . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (Jn. i, 1-14). The Son, therefore, was the Creator as well as the Father: "All things were made by Him."

The One God is three persons. How, we do not know. God does not ask us to understand Him but to serve Him and love Him. We do not understand how the bread which a mother eats becomes her flesh and blood; nor how at a certain period it becomes milk in her breast for the nourishment of her babe. Not even the mother herself understands the subtle process by which all this takes place, but she knows it is a fact. Man does not understand how his body and soul are united in one being, yet he knows that he is both spirit and flesh. So the One God is three persons. We should never be able to know this by ourselves. God has seen fit to reveal it to us; so we accept it on His word.

God the Son, of His own will became man, assuming an inferior nature for our salvation. In consequence of His voluntary humiliation He is glorified in His humanity, and, as God-Man, is Judge of the Living and the Dead in order "that all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father." In His humanity Christ was dishonored, mocked and tortured by man. In His humanity He is glorified as the Universal Judge in order that in the same nature in which He was outraged He may also be glorified. "Thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead."

Christ's passion and death were a mockery unless salvation be man's main concern. Why is Christ called *our Saviour* unless He saved us from something? He did not die in order to make us rich nor to give us worldly honors nor to prolong our mortal life. He did not become man to give us anything which human power or ingenuity could confer, but to give us something beyond human possibility to attain. Christ became man in order that man may become a child of God. That is the meaning of redemption. "To as many as receive Him, He gives them the power to become the sons of God" (Jn. i, 12). Mark the words—"*To as many as receive Him.*"

St. Augustine has said that "God made us without our concurrence, but He will not save us without our concurrence." It is only "*to as many as receive Him*, He gives the power to become the sons of God." Jesus, who became man in order to be our Leader and Model as well as our Redeemer, is the Judge of whether or not we receive Him and live by His holy law.

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," Christ proclaimed (Mt. xix, 17). Salvation is conditional. Unless we do our part we cannot profit by Christ's redemption. "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Mt. vii, 21).

Doing God's will—that is, keeping God's Commandments—is the test of whether or not we receive Christ and belong to His kingdom. He is to be the sole Judge. He knows not only our external actions

but our internal intentions. It is the will, or the intention that makes the deed good or bad. With the best intentions in the world we may be failures in the sight of men, but not in God's sight.

The sinner who sincerely tries to break the bonds of vice which hold him enslaved, may appear to man a reprobate, but in God's sight he may be fighting a heroic battle which will not go unrecompensed by Him who sees the heart. Such a one will receive aid from above which will eventually enable him to break his chains and cling to Christ. In the great day such a one may be justified and glorified more than the mortal who in life's crucible was not subjected to the intense fire of temptation which he passed through. For although it be more or less true that we make our own temptations, it is also true that they entail heroic struggle if we are to rise above them.

Christ is to be the Judge of all this. He who sees the soul of man, as we do the body, knows not only man's weaknesses and falls but also his efforts at rising. It is because Jesus Christ is truly God that He is qualified to pass judgment on mankind. None but God knows the secret workings of our minds, the hidden virtues and vices of our souls.

Moreover, Christ is rightfully Judge of mankind because we are His subjects, redeemed by His precious blood. No monarch has such claims on his people as Christ has on mankind. Christ purchased us by forfeiting His life for us. We can conceive of no better claim to loyalty and service.

Although God has made us free He has not made us irresponsible. Unless we use our free will in ac-

cordance with His Commandments we must stand the consequences. We may defy God and His ordinances if we will, but at our eternal peril. Free will does not mean license, any more than liberty means contempt of the law. On the front of one of our imposing courthouses the following words are carved in stone: *Liberty is obedience to the Law.*

God did not make us free in order that we might do as we please, but that we might have the merit of doing His bidding. If we were not free we should have no merit in our actions, because they would be the result, not of good-will, but of physical determination. The bird sings because he must sing. All visible creation, except man, is under fixed laws.

Man alone is physically free to alter his ways as he sees fit; to do, or not to do, what is proposed to him. Man may be externally forced to do the will of another, but all the power in the world cannot make him consent to do what he does not want to do. Virtue and vice depend upon the consent of the will. A man might be physically forced to do a deed of violence but if his will did not concur in the act he would not be guilty of it. God alone knows the intention which impels man's conduct. So God alone is capable of judging man.

Christ is not only God but He is also man. As God He knows all things; as man He knows from experience the weaknesses of our human frame. He is one of us, yet infinitely above us. As Universal Judge of mankind He will render to every one of us according to our works. In this life a clever person can outwit the law and deceive those closest to him. Man

may deceive man; but he cannot deceive the Maker of man.

Christ, the Judge, is also our Creator—"All things were made by Him" (Jn. i, 3). Christ, the Judge, is also our Saviour—"Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins" (Mt. i, 21). As Creator and Saviour, Jesus Christ will decide who are to become members of the divine family in the eternal kingdom of God. Only those will be companions of God in heaven, who are His followers on earth. None but lovers of God will possess the kingdom of God. "If you love Me," says the Lord, "keep My commandments" (Jn. xiv, 15). If we serve God here we shall reign with Him hereafter.

But if we choose in this life to be a law unto ourselves, instead of observing God's law, we shall have no part with the blessed in God's kingdom of everlasting bliss. They who ignore God here will be rejected by Him hereafter. Listen to the lament of the wicked, as recorded in Holy Scripture:

"Then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them, and taken away their labors. These seeing it, shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the suddenness of their unexpected salvation. Saying within themselves, repenting, and groaning for anguish of spirit: These are they whom we had some time in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed the life of the just madness, and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us.

"We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and like a post that runneth on. And as a ship that passeth through the waves: whereof when it is gone by, the trace cannot be found, nor the path of its keel in the waters: Or as when a bird flieth through the air, of the passage of which no mark can be found, but only the sound of the wings. . . . she hath flown through, and there is no mark found afterwards of her way: or as when an arrow is shot at a mark, the divided air presently cometh together again, so that the passage thereof is not known: so we also being born, forthwith ceased to be: and have been able to show no mark of virtue: but are consumed in our wickedness.

"Such things as these the sinners said in hell: for the hope of the wicked is as dust, which is blown away with the wind, and as a thin froth which is dispersed by the storm: and a smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind: and as the remembrance of a guest of one day that passeth by.

"But the just shall live for evermore: and their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a kingdom of glory, and a crown of beauty at the hand of the Lord" (Wisdom v, 1-17).

Every day we are writing our own judgment. God will only pronounce the verdict which our lives record. It depends on ourselves what sentence or fate we shall hear from the Judge of all mankind—the Judge of the living and the dead.

CHAPTER XIII

THE HOLY GHOST

THE Apostles' Creed states that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became man by the power of the Holy Ghost—"Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary." Here distinct personal action is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. Just as the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man, and, as the God-Man, lived and died for our salvation—so the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, was the One by whose agency the Son of God became man. The Creed, therefore, specifies the three persons of the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Christ Himself is authority for this. When He commissioned His Apostles to go into the whole world, and teach all things whatsoever He commanded them, He also commanded them to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Mt. xxviii, 19). In speaking thus He proclaimed one God in three persons. He did not say *in the names*, but "*in the name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The Apostle St. John has declared the same truth—"There are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one" (I Jn. v, 7). He did not say that these

three persons were one person, but that They were One—namely, one God. Our body and soul are two distinct things, yet they form one person. There are three distinct powers of our soul—the will, the memory, and the understanding. These three constitute one soul. We do not understand the distinction between the Deity and Personality, but since God declares it we accept it. On His word we believe that in one God there are three distinct persons.

That the Holy Ghost is God is repeatedly stated by our Saviour: "When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me" (Jn. xv, 26). When Christ conferred on His Apostles the power of forgiving sins, He said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (Jn. xx, 22). Finally in the act of ascending into heaven our Risen Lord promised that He would send the Holy Ghost as a Comforter and Enlightener, to abide with them, to strengthen them and to recall all things to their minds which He had taught them. "Stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high" (Lk. xxiv, 49). What this Power was He had previously stated: "The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you" (Jn. xiv, 26).

The Apostles, who certainly knew the mind of Christ, repeatedly declared the personality and power and divinity of the Holy Ghost. St. Peter affirmed that to attempt to deceive the Holy Ghost was the very same as to attempt to deceive God. "Ananias, why has Satan tempted thy heart, that

thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost . . . thou hast not lied to men, but to God" (Acts v, 3-4). St. Paul employs the expressions *temple of God* and *temple of the Holy Ghost* in exactly the same sense. "Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. iii, 16).

Just as Christ by His character and deeds confirmed His divine claims, so the Holy Ghost by what He accomplished confirmed the divine nature of His person and mission. Before the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles they were ordinary men of the peasant class. They had little or no education, for the most part. They were timid and uninfluential. But after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, we behold a miraculous transformation in them. A change in their intelligence and character was effected which was a virtual creation of new qualities in them. Without any study they became at once the most competent missionaries that ever existed. From being timorous they became at once the most courageous men of all time. They were completely transformed, and that as suddenly as a flash of lightning. Only God could do that.

Either God the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles or He did not. If He did descend, then we have proof of the truth of their mission, for the descent of the Holy Ghost was a miracle, and God never works a miracle for falsehood. If the Holy Ghost did not descend upon the Apostles, then we have a greater miracle than the actual descent of the Holy Ghost would be—namely, the transformation of the Apostles without power from on high. The world has known no such change as that which was

instantly wrought in the Apostles. After the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles went forth courageously, preaching Christ most eloquently and braving the hostility of the Jewish and Roman tribunals. The transformation of these peasants into Apostles was possible to divine power alone. The Jews themselves marveled at it, ascribing it to everything except to the power of God—just as they had ascribed the miracles of Jesus to everything except to their true cause.

Holy Scripture graphically describes the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles and the marvelous transformation thereby effected.

“And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed, and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these, that speak, Galileans? And how have we heard, every man our own tongue wherein we were born? . . . And they were all astonished, and wondered, saying one to another: What meaneth this? . . . But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spoke to them: . . . Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him, in the midst of you, as you also know: This same being delivered up, by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, you by the

hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. . . . This Jesus hath God raised again, whereof all we are witnesses. Being exalted therefore by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this which you see and hear. . . . Now when they had heard these things, they had compunction in their heart, and said to Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles: What shall we do, men *and* brethren? But Peter *said* to them: Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . They therefore that received his word, were baptized; and there were added in that day about three thousand souls. And they were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii, 1-42).

St. Augustine exclaimed, on considering the transformation of the Apostles: "Either the Apostles were transformed or not. If they were, it was a great miracle, manifesting the divine power of the Holy Ghost, and establishing the truth of Christianity. If they were not transformed, we have a greater miracle, namely, the transformation of the world by twelve such men." When we consider the tremendous task which confronted the Apostles, it becomes clear that no merely human power could accomplish unaided what they achieved.

The office of the Holy Ghost according to Christ's promise is to abide with the Church forever and to guide her in the way of holiness and truth. Brief reflection will show that the Holy Ghost has indeed fulfilled His mission of abiding with the Church and preserving in her the truths which her divine Founder entrusted to her. From the time when Christ established His Church down to the present, she has

not changed one iota of the Faith deposited with her. During that same period how many systems of thought have come and gone; what changes have been wrought in various creeds; what stupendous upheavals have occurred in every school of philosophy, and in every department of human knowledge! Yet the Church has not changed! This is due to divine power alone. It is the work of the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. It is the fulfillment of Christ's guarantee that the Spirit of Truth should abide forever with His Church (Jn. xiv, 16, 17, 26). When Christ said of His Church: "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Lk. x, 16). He knew that always His Church should be His living voice in the world, because in her was to dwell perpetually the Holy Spirit of Truth.

Not only does the Holy Ghost preserve the Church in truth, He is also the Sanctifier of all those who attain holiness by her ministrations. The Sacraments are the ordinary means established by Christ for conveying grace. The Sacraments are outward signs of inward grace. It is the active operation of the Holy Ghost that gives efficacy to the Sacraments. God is working continually in the universe. It is His power which sustains and directs the world He created. By His power He is everywhere present. And so in His Church, which is His special creation, God is active; and particularly so in the means of grace He has established for man's sanctification—the Sacraments.

The Holy Ghost also acts in the soul of each individual. It is by His inspirations and help that man is able to live holily. He enlightens, strengthens and

consoles those in whom He dwells. It was thus that little children and weak women were able to withstand the arguments and assaults of tyrannical persecutors. It is thus that today those who are faithful to the Sacraments of Christ are able to conquer the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The Holy Ghost is rightly called the Comforter and the Consoler. Strengthened by Him, the martyrs astounded their tormentors by their invincible patience and courage. Feeble women and little children were stronger than their infuriated persecutors. Against promises, threats and torture they stood firm and loyal to Christ, remembering that He had said: "He that shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it" (Mt. xvi, 25); and, moreover, fortified by that same Holy Spirit who made heroic missionaries out of the timorous Twelve.

That same Holy Spirit is directing the Church today. This is why Catholics have no fear for the Church no matter what calamities befall her. The same Holy Spirit is also in the Sacraments giving grace to those rightly disposed.

We are the temples of the Holy Ghost. God who is everywhere in creation by His omnipresence, is, in a special manner, in the souls of the just. "Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. iii, 16). What an incentive this is to live a virtuous life! It is by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in us in this life that eventually we shall become partakers of the divine nature. "To as many as receive Him, He gives them the power to become the sons of God" (Jn. i,

12). What a light this throws on life! What a wonderful significance it gives to our earthly career!

God certainly has done His part for our eternal welfare. It rests with us to do our part. God who made us without our coöperation will not save us without our coöperation. The Church was established by Christ to afford us every help in our pilgrimage from time to eternity. The Holy Ghost is as active now as on the day of Pentecost when He transformed the Apostles. He will transform us also, if we correspond to His inspirations.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TRINITY

THE Trinity is a mystery. By *mystery* we do not mean something mythical or fanciful, but something real which is nevertheless beyond our comprehension. There are mysteries in nature. We do not understand how the grass which cattle eat is turned into milk. We do not understand how the thoughts of our mind are transformed into speech. These things are real, even though they be mysteries. If in creation there are things we do not understand, we should not be surprised that we do not understand the Creator.

By means of observation and reason we may know that there is a Creator. The harmony and unity of the universe proclaim a Designer. Design proclaims intelligence and will. So we know that there is an intelligent Creator endowed with intellect and will.

This, and a few more things, we may know about the Creator by natural observation and reason. But unless God had revealed it to us, we should never have known the Trinity. Pascal, one of the greatest thinkers of all time, has said: "The highest point of reason is to know that there is an infinitude of things that surpass reason." After revelation of this truth of the Trinity, we are not able to understand it. We accept it on the word of God—that is, in Faith.

In the Old Testament the mystery of the Trinity was foreshadowed. In the beginning God said: "Let us make man to our image and likeness" (Gen. i, 26). This was before the creation of man, and was addressed to Those who could create, otherwise it was meaningless. God alone can create. Hence, when the Creator was communing with Others concerning creation They were like Himself—the Creator—God. There can be only one Creator. When, therefore, God said: "Let us make man," He foreshadowed the truth of the Trinity which later was to be revealed to mankind.

After the creation, when Adam had eaten the forbidden fruit, God said: "Behold Adam is become as one of us" (Gen. iii, 22).

The revelation of the Trinity was made distinctly when the Angel Gabriel—the messenger from God to the Blessed Virgin—announced the incarnation. The Angel said to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Lk. i, 35). In these words of Heaven's ambassador we hear proclaimed the entire Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Again this mystery of the Trinity was declared at the baptism of Christ in the Jordan, when were heard the words from on high: "This is my beloved Son"; and at the same time the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, appeared above Jesus (Mt. iii, 16-17).

After the Resurrection, and before the ascension into heaven, Christ, in giving power to His Apostles to represent Him on earth, said: "As the Father hath

sent Me, I also send you." . . . "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Jn. xx, 21 . . . Mt. xxviii, 19).

Again in Christ's prayer to the Eternal Father for His Apostles, He said: "That they may be one, as We also are one" (Jn. xvii, 22).

Revelation does not explain the Trinity but only proclaims it. The Apostles did not understand it any more than we do. But they preached it. St. John, in his first epistle, says: "And there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one" (I Jn. v, 7). In the opening passage of his Gospel the same Apostle says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn. i, 1). And to show clearly that the Word was a divine person, he adds: "All things were made by Him: and without Him was made nothing that was made. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father)" (Jn. i, 3, 14).

There can be no question of the fact of the Trinity. We must reject Revelation altogether or accept the Trinity. We shall never understand it, until we see God, as He is, in His kingdom of glory and blessedness. We accept this truth now on God's word, just as we accept the Incarnation and the Blessed Eucharist, and other truths of Revelation.

Having stated the fact of the Trinity, it is advisable to examine into it, not with a view of solving the

mystery, but of showing that although it is above reason it is not against reason.

Many things are above our understanding, yet not opposed to reason. We do not understand the marvelous human mechanism by which one man communicates the secrets of his soul to another. By a process which the most learned scientist does not understand, man, by his will power, sets into action a set of nerves which control the vocal cords and the muscles of the mouth and lips. The movement of the mouth and lips gives vibration to the air which in turn reaches the delicate membrane of the listener's ear; and then by a reverse process the nervous mechanism transfers the vibration from the ear to the mind of the hearer, and, in some way incomprehensible to man, the ideas of the speaker become the ideas of the listener.

How it is that the spirit thus acts on matter—transmitting the ideas of the mind by material agencies—is incomprehensible. In all the ages this has been the problem which has engaged the greatest philosophers, but they are as far from the solution now as in the beginning. We know that in some subtle way there is communication between the spiritual and material in man—but how this communication is effected is beyond the comprehension of the wisest of mankind.

And this is but one of many things about our own selves, which, although we know it to be above our reason to understand, is not against reason to believe. If, therefore, we are unable to comprehend our own selves we certainly should not be surprised that our Maker should be incomprehensible to us.

Until man had discovered the way of producing intense heat it was not known that the hardest metals could exist in three different states—the solid, the liquid and the gaseous. The hardest steel may be converted into vapor and vanish as gas, like air. Water may be a solid, a liquid, or a vapor. Ice, water and steam are one and the same substance. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are one God.

What is meant when it is said that the Trinity is one God in three persons? It means that in the one Divine Nature there are three distinct persons. Is this not a contradiction? No. If it were said that one God was three gods, or that one person was three persons, it would be a contradiction; but it is not a contradiction when it is said that in one God there are three persons.

The Apostles' Creed says: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty . . . and in Jesus Christ, His only Son . . . and in the Holy Ghost." Therefore in God there are three very distinct persons; since *Father* denotes something altogether different from *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost* something entirely different from Father and Son.

By a *person* we understand one endowed with reason—one who has a rational nature. Except in the case of God, one nature denotes one person. Had not God distinctly revealed it, we should not know it was otherwise with regard to the Divine Nature.

In God the three persons, although distinct, are equal—each being God. From the names of the persons of the Trinity it might seem that there was inequality among Them. Ordinarily, the term *father*

denotes priority to *son*. But that is only when a son is a born son. The Son of God was not born since He existed from all eternity. He was begotten, not born. An example will show how this may be.

A flame always emits light and heat. The light and heat, although originating with the flame, are simultaneous with it. By nature the flame is prior to the light or heat, but not by origin. All three exist simultaneously, but the light and heat are, as it were, begotten by the flame. Of course in dealing with this subject we are above our heads. All that we can do is to show some resemblance in nature to what is found in the Author of Nature.

When we say that God existed from eternity, we mean that He always existed. Hence, the three persons in God existed always. The term *Father* is attributed to the First Person as the Creator: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth." Creation is assigned to the Father, the First Person of the Trinity, because *father* ordinarily indicates *source* or *origin*. The term *Son* is attributed to the Second Person, because He is the Word of God; and as a word is the expression of thought, the Second Person is the Wisdom of God. The *Holy Ghost* is termed the Paraclete, the Sanctifier. He is the Love of God. As heat comes from the flame and light, so Love emanates from the Power and Wisdom of God, namely the Third Person of the Trinity—the Holy Ghost.

Power, Wisdom, Holiness, substantially personified, are in God. What a wonderful revelation of God this is! The Power of God is manifested in the vastness and energy of the universe. The wisdom of

God is shown in the marvelous unity and design of creation. The holiness of God is shown in the saints and in the Sacraments of the Church—the kingdom of God on earth.

The bond that unites the persons of the Trinity is the nature of God. From all eternity they possessed the same divine nature. There is no priority, no superiority, no inferiority among the divine persons.

Nothing in created nature corresponds with the Creator; hence, nothing can give us by comparison or illustration an adequate idea of the Trinity. And God does not want us fully to understand Him here. If He did He would have made it possible for us to comprehend Him. We shall understand Him when we have proved our title to be the children of God.

As members of the divine family, we shall see Him and know Him. By the light of glory we shall be able to look upon Him and see what is beyond human capacity to behold. As by the x-rays we may see what to the naked vision is impossible—so by the light of glory we shall see and know God. As by the radio we hear sounds imperceptible by the unaided ear—so in our risen and glorified life we shall learn the secrets of God's mysterious being.

Thomas à Kempis devoutly reminds us that our great concern is not to understand God, but to reverence and serve Him. "What doth it profit thee to discourse profoundly of the Trinity, if thou be void of humility, and consequently displeasing to the Trinity? In truth, sublime words make not a man just; but a virtuous life maketh him dear to God. . . . This is the highest wisdom: by despising the

world, to tend to the heavenly kingdom" (Bk. i, Chap. i, 3).

God has reserved further knowledge of Himself for those who employ the knowledge He has given them to do His holy will. Hence it is that Christ has said: "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done" (Mt. vi, 10). We shall come to God's kingdom by the path of God's Commandments. Once children of the kingdom we shall see God in His glory and know Him in proportion as we have loved and served Him.

CHAPTER XV

THE VIRGIN MARY

IN our consideration of the Incarnation we dwelt incidentally on the Virgin Mary in relation to the Virgin Birth of Jesus. In our present consideration we shall dwell on the Blessed Mother of God more in detail.

The highest encomium ever pronounced on a human being was that which came from on High to the Virgin Mary. The Blessed Trinity, by Its ambassador, the Angel Gabriel, addressed her as follows: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" (Lk. i, 28). These words were not the expression of the mind of the ambassador, but of God Himself, whose messenger Gabriel was. Catholics, therefore, have for authority Almighty God Himself for their veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

God the Father honored her not only by proclaiming her blessed among women, but also, and most especially, by choosing her to be the Mother of the promised Messiah—His own divine Son.

"Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High. . . . and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the Angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man?

And the Angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Lk. i, 31-35).

By the angel's words—"Therefore the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"—Mary is proclaimed the Mother of the Son of God, made man. As God, Christ, of course, is from all eternity; but as the God-Man Christ began to exist when He was conceived in the womb of Mary. And since the person Christ is True God and true man, and Mary is the Mother of Christ, she is the Mother of God according to His human generation. Hence, St. Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost, addressed Mary as follows:

"Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Lk. i, 42-43).

Revelation, therefore, clearly states that Mary is the Mother of God—understanding by the term *God* the person Christ, True God and true man.

Mary was a virgin before, during and after the conception and birth of Christ. One of her objections to the honor which the angel announced to her was thus expressed: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" (Lk. i, 34). The expression—"I know not man"—was the Hebrew equivalent for saying that she was a virgin. The angel at once set her at rest on this point by stating that the mystery was to be accomplished by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Centuries before the birth of Christ, the Prophet

Isaias had foretold that the mother of the Messiah was to be a virgin. "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (Is. vii, 14). As the sun's rays pass through glass without fracture of the glass, so Christ was born without affecting Mary's virginity.

Jesus was the only son of Mary. When reference is made in the Gospel to the *brethren of Jesus*, it is to His blood-relations of other degrees—it being customary among the Jews to call near relatives *brethren*. Mary was espoused to Joseph because otherwise she would have been stoned to death as an adulteress on the birth of Jesus.

As Mother of God, Mary is the crown of creation. No angel, no matter how exalted, can say to the Son of God as Mary can: "Thou art My Son." It was because of her intimate association with the All-holy God that she was so wonderfully endowed with every supernatural gift that could be bestowed upon a creature. Hence, the angel addressed her as "full of grace," which means that she was entirely acceptable and pleasing to God.

Of all creatures, Mary alone was conceived without original sin. This was a special privilege accorded her in view of her unique office, and through the foreseen merits of the Redeemer, her Son. Scripture indicates this in the words of God addressed to Satan. When a Redeemer was promised who was to be born of woman, God said to the tempter: "She shall crush thy head" (Gen. iii, 15). The Mother of the Redeemer was therefore to be the conqueror of Satan; not under his dominion as the rest of the human race.

Moreover, it is unthinkable that the Mother of God should ever have been even in the slightest degree touched by sin. Satan was never to have even the least claim on her who was to give birth to the All-holy, the Redeemer, the Son of God, made man.

When, accordingly, the angel addressed Mary as "full of grace," he was proclaiming her entire freedom from every stain of sin of whatever kind. This is the meaning of the *Immaculate Conception*. It does not mean that Mary was conceived without a human father—as was Christ; but that from the moment of her conception she was absolutely sinless, being entirely free from even original sin, the inheritance of the rest of mankind. As she was "full of grace" there was no place in her soul for anything even resembling sin.

As Mother of God, Mary's intercession is most efficacious. The saints, as servants of God, intercede for us. Mary does so as Mother of God. As a beloved mother manifests her desires to a devoted son, so does she present our petition to her divine Son. Hence, the devotion of Catholics to Mary the Mother of God, and their Mother also. Almost the last words of Jesus on the cross were those He spoke when He gave His Mother to be our Mother. At the foot of the cross St. John stood alongside Mary. To him, as the representative of His followers, Christ gave His Mother. From that day she has been the spiritual Mother of all the followers of her divine Son.

On earth Christ performed His first miracle at Mary's mere suggestion. He even, as it were, anticipated or altered the divine plan for her sake. For

He said to her before changing the water into wine: "My hour is not yet come" (Jn. ii, 4). Nevertheless He proceeded to do what she requested. That was the first miracle of His ministry on earth, and a pledge that in His glorious life in heaven He is pleased to do favors in order to honor her whom He has so inexpressibly honored by making her His Mother.

A great monarch once said that a single tear from his mother's eye would blot out many death warrants. Who can doubt that the prayer of Mary will move her divine Son to show mercy and kindness to the least deserving of us, if, with proper sentiments, we seek her intercession?

God came to us through Mary, surely we may go to Him through her. It was from her veins He drew the blood which He shed on Calvary. His Sacred Heart drew its first pulsations from her heart. His pierced hands and feet were formed in her body and from her very substance. She was close to Him in suffering. She is close to Him now in glory.

But no matter how exalted Mary is, she is only a creature. Between the Creator and the creature there is infinitude. The most exalted creature is, after all, something that might not have been at all. Only infinite power can create, that is, make something out of nothing. A million zeros remain still zero. To bridge over *nothing* and *something* requires Omnipotence. Hence, there is but one Creator since there can be but one Infinite. To God alone is due adoration or supreme worship. No creature may be worshiped, no matter if that creature be the highest expression of Omnipotence. Accordingly, although

we venerate Mary, we do not adore her. All that Mary is and has, is God's gift.

But Mary has the love of her divine Son. No mother was ever so much loved as was Mary by her divine Son. That love did not end with life. It has continued into eternity. Is it any wonder, then, that her children go to her in their needs! Not that they may not go direct to God; but what petitioner to the throne would not like to be conducted thither by the mother of the monarch.

God has given us His Mother to be our Mother because He knows our nature. He gave us our own mothers, and consequently knows the heart of a mother. Many a sinner who has felt too degraded to approach the All-holy God, has taken courage to advance with his hand in Mary's hand.

It is not Catholics only who revere the Mother of our Saviour. Some of the noblest tributes paid to the Blessed Virgin have come from Protestant sources. The following is from Lecky:

"The world is governed by its ideals; and seldom or never has there been one which has exercised a more profound and, on the whole, a more salutary influence than the medieval conception of the Virgin. . . . All that was best in Europe clustered around it, and it is the origin of many of the purest elements of our civilization" (*History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*).

To John Keble we are indebted for the following beautiful lines:

"Ave Maria! thou whose name
All but adoring love can claim,
Yet we may reach thy shrine;

For He thy Son and Saviour, vows
To crown all lowly, lofty brows
With love and joy like thine."

The Christian Year—The Annunciation

The poet, Wordsworth, thus addresses the Mother of our Redeemer:

"Mother, whose virgin bosom was uncrost
With the least thought to sin allied;
Woman above all women glorified,
Our tainted nature's solitary boast;
Purer than foam on central ocean tost."

Longfellow presents our Blessed Mother in the following beautiful lines:

"This is indeed the Blessed Mary's land,
Virgin and Mother of our dear Redeemer;
All hearts are touched and softened at her name;
Alike the bandit with the bloody hand,
The priest, the prince, the scholar and the peasant,
The man of deeds, the visionary dreamer,
Pay homage to her as one ever present;
And even as children who have much offended
A too indulgent father, in great shame,
Penitent, yet not daring unattended
To go into his presence, at the gate
Speak with their sister, and confiding wait
Till she goes in before and intercedes;
So men, repenting of their evil deeds,
And yet not venturing rashly to draw near
With their requests an angry Father's ear,
Offer to her their prayers and their confession.
And she for them in heaven makes intercession.
And if our Faith had given us nothing more
Than this Example of All Womanhood,—

So mild, so merciful, so strong, so good,
So patient, peaceful, loyal, loving, pure,—
This were enough to prove it higher and truer
Than all the creeds the world had known before.”

The Golden Legend

It is the Catholic Creed—the Creed of Christ's own Church—that has ever held up to mankind the virginity and veneration of the Mother of God.

As Mary was closest to Jesus in suffering, so is she nearest Him in glory. Christ, who ascended into heaven with His glorified body, did not allow the body of her from whom He received His own body to remain on earth, subject to corruption. She who was the Daughter of the Eternal Father, and the Mother of the Beloved Son, and the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, was assumed into heaven when her earthly career terminated, and is now enthroned Queen of Angels and Saints.

Associated with the Blessed Trinity in the Creed, Mary is also associated with the Triune God in that blessed abode to which the Creed guides all those who truly live by it. Where Mary is, there we too may be if only we prove ourselves her true children. The best way to be a child of Mary is to serve and love her Son. The best way to honor Mary is to honor Jesus, and the best way to serve, reverence and love Jesus is in union with her who of all mankind served, revered and loved Him most. God came to us through Mary. Surely we may go to Him through her—*Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

CHAPTER XVI

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

EVERY Christian denomination that recites the Apostles' Creed repeats the words: "I believe in . . . the Holy Catholic Church." *The Holy Catholic Church* is the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Christ founded one Church only, with definite doctrine and with a supreme visible head.

For many centuries after the time of Christ the Catholic Church, with the Pope as its visible head, was the acknowledged Church of Christ throughout Christendom and was the only Church claiming to be Christ's own Church. In the tenth century the Greeks separated from the Church established by Christ. Their contention was that there was no supreme visible head of the Catholic Church. In the sixteenth century the Reformers, so-called, separated from the Church established by Christ. Their contention was that the Church founded by Christ had fallen into error. Since the sixteenth century the denominations which sprang from the Reformation have become so numerous that they are counted by hundreds, and have so modified their doctrine, that if the original reformers returned to earth they would not recognize the Churches they founded.

Christendom now presents three distinct religions

or Churches: (1) the original Catholic Church; (2) the later Greek Church; and, (3) the modern Protestant Church. As both the Greek Church and the Protestant Church separated from the original Catholic Church because they maintained that the original Church of Christ had fallen into error—and error so essential as to justify separation—it follows that both the Greek Church and the Protestant Church hold different doctrines from the Catholic Church. Hence, if the Catholic Church is right the Greek and the Protestant Churches are wrong. If the Catholic Church be wrong, the original Church of Christ is wrong, for the Catholic is the only Church which dates its origin from Christ. If the original Church of Christ be in error, Christ's promise has failed, and He was not what He claimed to be. Christ claimed to be God. But God's word cannot fail. If, therefore, the original Church of Christ be in error, her Founder's word was false, He was not God, and Christianity is false.

It all comes to this, therefore: Was Christ God and did He establish a Church which was to last forever, and to teach the truth and only the truth in religious matters?

All Christians believe that Christ is God. They affirm this belief when they recite the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." From Scripture it is also certain that Christ established a Church which was to last forever and to teach His revealed truth always. They who deny that Christ is God are consistent in rejecting the Catholic Church. But those who

believe that Christ is God are inconsistent and illogical in rejecting the Catholic Church.

Let me make this plain. If Christ be not God He was a fool or a fraud, and Christianity as a religion is false. But if Christ is God, His word cannot fail. He gave His word that His Church should never falsify His doctrine. Hence those who believe that Christ is God, must also believe that the Church He founded can never falsify His teaching.

Consistency demands that we accept the Catholic Church as the living teacher of God's truth, or reject both her Founder and His religion. There is no midway. If Christ is God, His word is guarantee of truth, and His word has been given to the Catholic Church—the only one that goes back to Him as Founder. If Christ be not God, away with Christian belief altogether; for the basis of Christianity is the divinity of Christ, and if the basis be not sound the whole edifice is unsound.

It may be asked: If the the case is as stated, how is it that any one can fail to see the logic of it? It is because either environment or education has been such as to put some people into a state of mind by which they are not open to conviction in the matter. The preaching and miracles of our divine Lord were the same for all the people who heard and saw Him, but all did not become His followers. The teaching and miracles which converted those who were open to conviction failed to convert those who were not open to conviction. There must be the disposition to believe the truth; and the effort to learn the truth; and the determination to pay the price for

the truth; if one is to know and to embrace the truth.

Christ said: "My kingdom is not of this world" (Jn. xviii, 36). The Jewish leaders wanted a messiah whose kingdom was of this world, so they blinded themselves to the evidence which Christ presented. But the great body of the people accepted the evidence and acclaimed Christ as the Messiah, as we see from the Bible: "Many therefore of the Jews, who . . . had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in Him. . . . The chief priests therefore, and the Pharisees, gathered a council, and said: What do we, for this man doth many miracles? If we let Him alone, all will believe in Him. . . . From that day therefore they devised to put Jesus to death" (Jn. xi, 45-53).

It is clearly evident, therefore, that the same deeds which converted those open to conviction, only hardened and perverted those who were not open to conviction. These latter were not looking for the truth, but for what they wanted. They did not have the disposition to believe; but rather the will to have their own way. This we see from the fact that the Jewish leaders plotted murder in order to destroy the evidence which they did not want to accept.

Hear what the Gospel says in the matter: "A great multitude of the Jews came . . . that they might see Lazarus, whom Christ had raised from the dead. But the chief priests thought to kill Lazarus also; because many of the Jews, by reason of him, went away, and believed in Jesus. And on the next day, a great multitude that was come to the festival day, when they had heard that Jesus was

coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried: Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel" (Jn. xii, 9-13).

Why were the Jewish leaders not open to conviction as were the people? Because the ruling element had made up their minds. They wanted a messiah who would confirm them in their worldly ambitions; but Christ proclaimed that His Kingdom was not of this world, so they rejected Him. They not only rejected Him, but, by the vilest propaganda and threats ever employed among mankind, forced those who acclaimed Christ as the Messiah on Palm Sunday, to clamor for His death on Good Friday. They who shouted "*Hosanna*" on Sunday, cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," on the following Friday.

Various things can put people into a state of mind in which, like the Scribes and the Pharisees, they are not open to conviction. National or racial prejudice will cause people of one race or nation not to be open to conviction with regard to what concerns the claims of the other race or nation. The World War affords proof of this. Again, if one's welfare or interests be at stake one will frequently not be open to conviction in the case in question. Lawsuits are proof of this. Neither party to a lawsuit is ordinarily open to conviction regarding the point at issue. That is why recourse is had to litigation.

And so with regard to religion—circumstances of one kind or another may prevent people from seeing or adopting the truth. Sometimes this state of mind is culpable, sometimes it is not. God is the sole Judge. We know how people act in ordinary mat-

ters. If, for instance, a person claimed to have the sole title to a piece of property to which another thought he had a claim, the other would undoubtedly look into the legality of the sole claim.

The Catholic Church claims to be the sole institution founded by Jesus Christ and guaranteed by Him to teach His truths to the end of time. That claim is serious and worth while examining into. Very many of the most intellectual and upright persons of other creeds have examined into these claims of the Catholic Church and have been convinced that her claims are true, and have in consequence joined her communion. This they have done, ordinarily, at the cost of great sacrifice—socially, financially and prospectively. They have found, on investigation, that their previous notion of the Catholic Church was only a caricature of her. They found that their false ideas of the Catholic Church were due to the fact that those who separated from her considered it necessary to misrepresent her in order to try to justify their stand. In this way the information they had of her was poisoned at its source.

It has been said that much of history since the Reformation has been a conspiracy against the Catholic Church. Some people, accordingly, may not be culpable for their hostile attitude towards Christ's own Church. However—when they see the disruption of Protestant belief, and its contradictory ritual and practice, and its drift towards unbelief or paganism; and, on the other hand the definite Creed and ritual of the Catholic Church—they certainly should make inquiries into the credentials of the only Church whose Creed has not changed since it

was given to her by her divine Founder, and which claims, and has claimed from the beginning, to be the sole Church of Christ.

Let me here quote the words of an American—one who for upwards of forty years opposed the Catholic Church because he was ignorant of her, but who eventually learned her true character and is now one of her foremost champions—John L. Stoddard, whom many will recall as the leading lecturer on the American platform some fifteen or twenty years ago.

“When I am asked what I have found within the Catholic Church superior to all that Protestantism gave me, I find that language is inadequate to express it. One thinks of the familiar metaphor of a stained-glass window in a vast cathedral. Seen from without by day, this seems to be an unintelligible mass of dusky glass. Viewed from within, however, it reveals a beautiful design, where sacred story glows resplendently in form and color. So it is with the Church of Rome. One must enter it to understand its sanctity and charm.

“When I reflect upon that Church’s long, unbroken continuity extending back to the very days of the Apostles; when I recall her grand, inspiring traditions, her blessed sacraments, her immemorial language, her changeless creed, her noble ritual, her stately ceremonies, her priceless works of art, her wondrous unity of doctrine, her ancient prayers, her matchless organization, her Apostolic authority, her splendid roll of Saints and Martyrs reaching up like Jacob’s ladder, and uniting earth and heaven; when I reflect upon the intercession for us of those Saints and Martyrs, enhanced by the petitions of the Blessed Mother of Our Lord; and, last, not least, when I consider the abiding presence of the Saviour on her altars;—I feel that this One, Holy, Apostolic Church has given me certainty for doubt, order for confusion, sunlight for darkness, and substance for shadow. It is the Bread of Life, and the Wine of the Soul, instead of the

unsatisfying husks; the father's welcome, with the ring and the robe, instead of the weary exile in the wilderness of doubt. It is true the prodigal must retrace the homeward road, and even enter the doorway of the mansion on his knees; but within, what a recompense!

"Favored are those who from their childhood up are nurtured in the Catholic Church, and to whom all her comforts, aids, and sacraments come no less freely than the air and sunshine.

"Yet I have sometimes wondered whether such favored Catholics ever know the rapture of the homeless waif, to whom the splendours of his Father's house are suddenly revealed; the consolation of the mariner whose storm-tossed vessel finally attains the sheltered port; the gratitude of the lonely wanderer, long lost in cold and darkness, who shares at last—however undeservedly—the warmth and light of God's great spiritual Home!" *

Christ is both divine and human. He is God from all eternity, and man from the Incarnation.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . all things were made by Him . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (Jn. i, 1-14).

As Christ, the Founder of the Catholic Church, is both divine and human—so also is the Church which He founded. The Catholic Church is *divine* in that her Founder is divine, and that she has His divine guarantee and assistance to transmit to the end of time without error the doctrine He imparted to her. She is *human* in that men, not angels, are her ministers and lay members. The doctrine of the Catholic Church is divinely true; the preachers of her doctrine and the ministers of her sacraments and her

* *Rebuilding a Lost Faith*—John L. Stoddard.

members are all human with the weaknesses and passions of fallen human nature.

Christ guaranteed His Church against error—He did not guarantee her members against sin. While promising that He would abide forever with His Church, He also stated that scandals would stain her fair name, but He fulminated dreadful threats against those who would be the cause of scandal. The Catholic Church, therefore, although the depository of Christ's truth, and its guardian and infallible teacher to the end of time, is, nevertheless, composed of members—clergy as well as laymen—who are weak human beings as is the rest of mankind.

God, who permits sin, threatens the sinner with dire chastisement. He permits sin because He endowed man with free will. If man did not have the choice of good and evil, he would not be free, but bound to a certain course of conduct. God so respects man's free will that He allowed one of the twelve Apostles to use it to betray the Divine Master. But although God allowed Judas to use his free will against its Giver, Christ said of the traitor: "It were better for that man, if he had not been born" (Mt. xxvi, 24). And so in His own Church, although He gives the grace and incentives for holiness of life, He allows man to use the liberty He has given him, either to observe the law or to violate it.

If one of the Twelve, under the very eyes and example of the Master, fell into grievous sin, we should not be surprised that in the course of the ages some of the ministers of His Church should prove false to their holy charge. The clergy have the

weaknesses and passions of human nature just as much as laymen have. True, their lofty vocation with its accompanying graces demands higher sanctity of them, but, notwithstanding, they sometimes forget their obligations just as laymen sometimes forget theirs. Sin is greater in the clergy because of their higher ideals and more abundant means of grace. But human nature is human nature, whether in clergy or laymen. Sometimes those who most severely criticize the clergy are themselves the worst offenders of God's law. However, that does not affect the matter in hand, which is that men—not angels—are the ministers of God's word, and that consequently they are not immune from the sins of mankind.

St. Paul declared that while preaching to others, he feared lest he himself might become a transgressor—"I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway" (I Cor. ix, 27). If the great Apostle, who saw Christ face to face, did not consider himself to be outside the range of sin, we should not be amazed that in the world-wide Catholic Church there have been and are those who are unworthy of their sacred calling.

All this has been said in order to make it clear that Christ who guaranteed His Church against false doctrine, did not guarantee her members—neither cleric nor lay—against evil conduct. A judge of the Supreme Court may be a most excellent interpreter and expounder of the Constitution, even though his moral conduct be not in keeping with his judicial status. The Church of Christ, although composed of

sinful men, is, nevertheless, by virtue of the divine guarantee of her Founder, safeguarded against error in proclaiming to the world the truths of Revelation.

Even if Scripture did not explicitly state that the Church of Christ would never err in doctrine, it would nevertheless be evident from the nature of the Church that she should be immune from error in transmitting the doctrine of her Founder. This will be clearly seen if we consider *why* Christ founded a Church. Christ, as we know, is God. He became man for two main purposes: (1) to atone for sin; and, (2) to be our Leader and Model. He atoned for sin once for all on Calvary. But by His life and teaching He became the Leader and Model not only for those of His own generation, but for all mankind to the end of time.

But *how* were His life and teaching to be transmitted down the ages, from generation to generation, until the end of the world?

Christ did not write a book, nor did He leave His message to mankind carved on stone or metal or written across the sky. Yet His deeds and doctrine were not merely for the people of His day. He *might* have devised any of many ways for the perpetuation of His ministry to mankind. But it is not a question of what He *might* have done but of what He *has* done. He established a Church—that is, a corporate body of men, especially formed by Himself—to continue what He had inaugurated. Particularly note that His *purpose* in establishing His Church *was to transmit His heavenly teaching to succeeding ages*. His Church was to speak for Him to

the generations which were to follow His departure from this world.

Since, therefore, *the office of Christ's Church was to represent Him on earth*, it is clear that if He wanted future generations to know His doctrine as He delivered it, He must see to it in some way that she truly speak for Him. Hence Christ declared that by special divine assistance, His Church would be preserved from error in teaching mankind the truths He had revealed to her.

Far from being surprised at this we should rather be surprised if Christ had not done it. If He thought enough of His doctrine to reveal it, He certainly thought enough of it to preserve it intact for those for whom it was intended. If His truths were so necessary to mankind that He declared that on them depended man's eternal welfare, it certainly behooved Him to see to it that these truths reached mankind to the end of the world, exactly as He had revealed them.

The means Christ chose for this was the institution of His Church, as we see from the plain language of Scripture. After Peter had solemnly affirmed his faith in Christ as the Son of the living God, Jesus said to him: "Thou art Peter [a rock]; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. xvi, 18). This was the promise. Christ proclaimed that He was to found a Church and that the gates of hell—that is, Satan or error—should never have place in it.

Christ also stated how the Church was to be safeguarded against error: "I will ask the Father, and

He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of Truth” (Jn. xiv, 16). It was humanly impossible for a teaching body not to err. Hence Christ proclaimed that the Spirit of Truth—the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost—should abide in His Church, and preserve his truth intact.

Having assured His Apostles of divine assistance in their ministry of proclaiming His doctrine, Christ solemnly commissioned them to go forth as His representatives:

“All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (Mt. xxviii, 18-20).

Christ made the Apostles His ambassadors, endowing them with power from on high with regard to their office of preserving and teaching the Faith. “As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them; and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (Jn. xx, 21-22). Christ thus conferred on His Apostles the Holy Spirit of Truth whom He had previously promised them. Thus fortified by divine assistance He made them His ambassadors. This He had particularly emphasized when He said: “Go: I send you . . . he that heareth you, heareth Me” (Lk. x, 3-16).

It was in view of the fact that God made His Church His representative on earth that St. Paul

spoke of her as "The House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy iii, 15). It was because the Church was *the pillar and ground of the truth* that St. Paul said:

"Though an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema" (Gal. i, 8). Strong words these from the great Apostle. But he states why he is so positive: "The gospel preached by me is not according to man, for neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it; but by the revelation of God" (Gal. i, 11-12). It is because St. Paul speaks in the name of God and with God's assurance of the Spirit of Truth abiding in him that he declared that the ministers of the Church are "ambassadors for Christ" (II Cor. v, 20).

It is certain that Christ will not permit His ambassadors to falsify Him nor His doctrine. For this reason Catholics regard the Church as they do Christ Himself. And they do so on His word: "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Lk. x, 16). This being so, the attitude of Catholics to the Church is that of St. Paul to Christ as expressed when he said: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix, 6). We have God's authority for hearing the Church as His voice. This is why those of Christ's own Church have that certainty of belief and that joyousness in worship and that firmness in times of trial which evoke the admiration of the world.

Let me here quote Cardinal Newman in confirmation of the peace and strength which Christ's own Church gives her children:

"From the time that I became a Catholic, of course I have no further history of my religious opinions to narrate. In saying this, I do not mean to say that my mind has been idle, or that I have given up thinking on theological subjects; but that I have had no changes to record, and have had no anxiety of heart whatever. I have been in perfect peace and contentment. I never have had one doubt. . . .

"From the day I became a Catholic to this day—now close upon thirty years—I have never had a moment's misgiving that the communion of Rome is that Church which the Apostles set up at Pentecost, which alone has the adoption of the sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and the revealed law. . . .

"Persons and places, incidents and circumstances of life, which belong to my first forty-four years are deeply lodged in my memory and my affections; moreover, I have had more to try and afflict me in various ways as a Catholic than as an Anglican; but never for a moment have I wished myself back; never have I ceased to thank my Maker for His mercy in enabling me to make the great change and never has He let me feel forsaken by Him or in distress, or any kind of religious trouble. . . .

"I have not had one moment's wavering of trust in the Catholic Church ever since I was received into her fold. I hold, and ever have held, that her Sovereign Pontiff is the center of unity and the Vicar of Christ; and I ever have had, and have still, an unclouded faith in her creed and in all its articles; a supreme satisfaction in her worship, discipline, and teaching; and an eager longing, and a hope against hope, that the many dear friends whom I have left in Protestantism may be partakers of my happiness." *

When one says: "I believe in . . . the Holy Catholic Church" two things are included in this act of faith—(1) belief; and, (2) the Holy Catholic Church. We must state what is meant by *belief*, and what is meant by *the Holy Catholic Church*.

* *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*.

By *belief* is not meant opinion, nor conjecture, nor view, nor strong persuasion—but, absolute conviction. This belief is of such a nature that it admits of no doubt whatsoever. It is as firm as mathematical certainty, and is based on the veracity of God who has revealed the doctrine of the Catholic Church. This firm conviction does not imply that what is believed is comprehended any more than the physicist comprehends what the force of gravity is.

This belief is so firm, that, if need be, believers will die for their conviction. Ten thousand difficulties do not make a doubt. Belief is consistent with a million difficulties but not with a single doubt. The astronomer has countless difficulties regarding the firmament—but not a doubt about its being in motion. Scientists have innumerable difficulties with regard to the nature of electricity—but not a doubt about its reality. Faith may present innumerable difficulties—but it does not admit of a single doubt. He who doubts in matters of Faith has never had real Faith or else has lost it. Faith and doubt are incompatible—just as incompatible as God and error, or as light and darkness. Catholic belief is based on the veracity of God Himself. That is why it never wavers.

If belief presented no difficulties, there would be little merit in Faith. There is little or no credit in believing what is evident. Faith is a virtue. Virtue which is not tested in some way can hardly be termed virtue. The virtue of courage is tested by danger; honesty, by temptation to steal; truthfulness, by the inducement to lie; and so on. Many people appear to be virtuous until some occasion reveals

their real character. Temptation does not make the thief but reveals him. Danger does not make the coward but declares him. And so of every virtue—the proof of it is in its capacity to stand the test. Truth, chastity, justice, and every virtue must rise to the occasion, and be superior to temptation. That is why virtue is so highly esteemed. It is proof that it has stood the test.

Faith also has its test. God reveals what is above our comprehension. He wants us to believe on His word. Belief often implies the acceptance of what is beyond our understanding. But, nevertheless, we bow down our judgment, sacrificing it on the altar of God's veracity, and thus paying Him the tribute of intellectual submission. That is what makes Faith valuable in God's sight. It is the sacrifice of our noblest faculty—our judgment.

The tendency to self-opinion is proverbial. Ordinarily, the last thing a man will renounce is his own opinion. Some persons hold to their own judgment in spite of every valid argument to the contrary. Now to relinquish one's own judgment on the sole word of another is a great compliment to the character of that other. That is what makes Faith so meritorious. It is the relinquishing of what is dearest to man.

This does not mean that Faith is blind or unreasonable. Without understanding his diagnosis we submit to the judgment of a physician whom we trust. Without understanding how he performs the operation, we place our lives in the hands of a surgeon in whom we have confidence. We entrust our safety to the engineer of the train which we board,

not because we understand engineering, but because we have faith in the engineer. And so we submit our judgment to the word of God because we know He can neither deceive nor be deceived. That is good logic. That is no surrender of reason, but a right use of it.

Of course, the whole matter reduces itself to this: Has God spoken? Christ is God. Christ has spoken. Therefore, our belief in His preaching is rational and absolutely firm. Hence, Catholic belief is fixed because truth is fixed. Catholics do not have to worry about doctrine. Everything essential has been settled once for all by Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Light of the world. So much for *belief*.

Let us now consider the Church. When it is said that we believe in *the Holy Catholic Church*, we mean by *the Church* that organization instituted by Christ for continuing and extending the work which He began. Christ did not write a book, nor did He carve His teaching on stone. Neither did He leave it to chance to reach future generations. He established a society called the Holy Catholic Church, and left with this society not only His teaching, but also His guarantee that His teaching would be divinely safeguarded from error.

Unless Christ's own Church had divine guidance and support, it had perished before it had fairly begun. Tradition states that St. Peter on his way to preach the religion of Christ to the citizens of Rome was met by a pagan philosopher. The following dialogue ensued:

"Whither art thou bound, Galilean?"

"To Rome."

"What wouldst thou in Rome?"

"To teach Christ Crucified."

"His doctrine is?"

"That the soul is of more value than the whole world."

"But the Romans love wealth. What else?"

"Self-denial and humility."

"The Romans are proud and honor pride. What else?"

"Renunciation of worldly pleasure."

"Go back; thou hast come to the wrong people; for the Romans are addicted to wealth, pleasure and enjoyment."

What chance had the Church of Christ against such odds, unless God was with her? But because God was with her, she triumphed over every obstacle, making pagan Rome the heart of Christendom, and supplanting the Roman Eagles by the Cross.

The Church is not something in the air—something intangible; but a real organization of Christ's own founding. Christ established His Church to preach His doctrine and to administer His sacraments. Such a mission requires human beings and material means. The Church is spiritual in the sense that she employs spiritual motives, and gives spiritual aids, and aims at spiritual welfare. But she is visible and material, also, inasmuch as she is composed of human ministers and employs material agencies. A Church that preaches and administers sacraments must have men to preach and to administer the sacred rites.

The doctrine of Christ, and the mode of admin-

istering His sacraments were left, not in a book, but, with a living organization. It was this organization—which Christ called His Church—that He sent forth into the world to preach His religion and to give His sacramental help for its practice. If Christ's teaching was to be kept intact, somebody had to keep it, somebody had to pass it on unerringly by word or writing.

Those, therefore, who say that Christ established a religion but not a visible Church are like unto those who would affirm that an eloquent discourse was delivered without a speaker. The invisible-Church idea was invented in an effort to save Protestantism; for it was clear that no visible Church of Christ would be so contradictory in doctrine and practice as were the various Evangelical denominations. So they devised the theory that the religion of Christ was the spirit of Christ manifesting itself variously in various denominations.

St. Paul, however, has said that even if an angel from heaven should preach a different doctrine from what the Church delivered, the angel should not be heard, but should be anathematized. When, therefore, the Apostles' Creed states, "I believe in . . . the Holy Catholic Church," the meaning is that we believe in her as if we beheld Christ Himself in person addressing us.

In putting this trust in the Church we are simply doing what Christ has enjoined upon us. He said of His representatives: "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Lk. x, 16). The resurrected Christ, in speaking to His Church as His representative, said: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (Jn. xx,

21). If He who said these words was God, we are right in believing His Church as we should believe Himself. If He who said these words were not God, then there is no divine Church at all, and there is no use belonging to any Church. But Christ is God; He established a Church; that Church is the Holy Catholic Church—Christ's own Church; and we believe in her as we do in God Himself.

Some denominations recite the Apostles' Creed regularly at their services. They repeat Sunday after Sunday—"I believe in . . . the Holy Catholic Church." Nevertheless they do not believe in the Holy Catholic Church.

Catholic is from the Greek word meaning *universal*. It was applied to the Church of Christ because this Church was not confined to any part of the world, nor to any race or nation, nor identified with any government or class of people, but existed in every part of the world, and embraced every race and nation, and functioned under every form of government. Yet, although this Church has always been universal, it forms one corporate body, as closely united as if it existed in one place only, notwithstanding the fact that it exists everywhere. The Catholic Church is the only corporate religious body in the world which is not national, racial nor local. By *corporate* body is meant a society whose members are united in one organization, just as the members of the human body are united to form one person.

The Catholic Church is not only universal in the sense that she exists in every part of the world as one body under one administrative head, but also

in the sense that her teaching is everywhere and always the same. We know how difficult, or rather impossible, it is for a local society of any kind to hold together for a long period, and to preserve unity of tenets among its members. It is much more difficult for a state or national government to preserve, for long, unity of belief and government.

Christ said of His Church: "I am with you all days" (Mt. xxviii, 20). This explains the universal and perpetual existence of the Catholic Church; and also accounts for the fact that her teaching has always been the truth of God, and therefore always the same, since truth never changes.

The Catholic Church is the only corporate religious society which goes back to Jesus Christ, the Founder of Christianity. The Church founded by Christ was a corporate society with Peter as its first head: "Thou art Peter [a rock]; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. xvi, 18). It is the Catholic Church, therefore, or the rejection of Christ and His Church altogether, if one wants to be logical and consistent.

In conclusion, I quote the following from Von Ruville, who became a Catholic after years of opposition to the Catholic Church:

"When a man has taken an important step in a new direction, which affects the future course of his life, he will ask himself, perhaps repeatedly, whether what he has done was right or wrong. It has not been so with me. After I had once accepted the Catholic Faith such thoughts never entered my mind. Now at last I comprehended the power of the Catholic Church over men of every class, every profession, every degree of education. She has a gift to bestow which nothing

on earth can equal, a gift which can benefit every believer, sanctifying the body by filling the soul with heavenly light.

"Looking back I should like to call attention to one point. I have been practically free from the inner conflicts which are supposed to be inseparable from such changes. My aim was the Truth, and after I had found this in Jesus Christ, my aim was Jesus Christ. To come as close to Him as possible was my longing, even unto the full union in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

"A Church has only a right to exist insofar as it is a means to bring men nearer to Christ. I was compelled to become a Catholic; there was no choice. And had the Catholic doctrine been explained to me thirty years ago, I believe I should then have become a Catholic.

"As far as I am concerned I can joyfully acknowledge that since the time of my conversion no evil has come to my notice in the Catholic Church, nothing but purity and sanctity. In the Protestant Church I found much that was beautiful and good, but yet many weighty and grave defects, and there were no visible remedies at all for their removal except the one which is expressed in the call back to Holy Church." *

* *Back to Holy Church*—Von Ruville.

CHAPTER XVII

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

IN the Apostles' Creed, directly after the declaration "I believe in . . . the Holy Catholic Church," come the words: "I believe in . . . the Communion of Saints." *The Communion of Saints* is one of the most consoling doctrines of Christianity. It proclaims that the followers of Christ are not isolated soldiers of the Cross, but that they belong to a closely knit array of all those who under the leadership of Christ—the Eternal King—have won or are striving to win the crown of immortal glory.

The Communion of Saints embraces three classes: (1) those who have fought the good Christian fight, have won and are crowned; (2) those who have fought the good fight and have won, but have not yet been crowned; and (3) those who are still engaged as soldiers of Christ, fighting the good fight against the world, the evil allurements of the flesh and the devil. Members of Christ's own Church know that they are united by a spiritual bond which establishes helpful relationship among the faithful on earth; and between the faithful on earth and those who have gone before to their reward—whether they be already crowned in glory with

Christ their King, or detained in purgatory, awaiting their coronation.

Members of Christ's own Church realize that they are not alone in the warfare of life. They know, with the Apostle St. Paul, that they can and do pray for one another, and that those mutual prayers bring down God's grace and help in the battles of Christian warfare. Hear the words of St. Paul:

"Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to all the saints who are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace be to you, and peace. . . . I cease not to give thanks for you, making commemoration of you in my prayers, that the God of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation" (Eph. i, 1, 16, 17).

The Apostle not only assured the faithful of his prayers for them, but moreover asked theirs for himself:

"Take unto you the helmet of salvation . . . by all prayer and supplication praying at all times . . . for all the saints, and for me, that speech may be given me, that I may open my mouth with confidence, to make known the mystery of the Gospel for which I am an ambassador" (Eph. vi, 17-20).

The epistles of St. Paul abound in his requests to to the faithful for their prayers and in his assurance that he constantly prays for them: "Brethren, pray for us," he writes to the Thessalonians (II Thes. iii, 1). And he assures them of his prayers: "Wherefore we pray always for you" (II Thes. i, 11). These were not vain words. Unless the faithful on earth could by their prayers aid one another, the

requests and promises of prayers made by the Apostle were meaningless.

It is certain, therefore, that Revelation teaches us that the faithful on earth are associated in a holy union, and that they are able to be of help to one another before the throne of God. This is the Communion of Saints on earth.

Scripture calls those persons *saints* who belong to the body of the followers of Christ and are striving to attain the crown of holiness. In a restricted sense, only those are saints who are crowned in glory with their triumphant Leader, Christ. But in a broader sense, all those are termed saints, who are followers of Christ and hope to be victorious under His leadership.

The bond of Christian faith and fellowship unites not only the faithful on earth, among themselves, but also the faithful on earth with those beyond—whether they be the saints in heaven or those awaiting entrance into heaven in the place of purification. Christ Himself declared: "There shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance" (Lk. xv, 10). Christ tells us that His faithful followers on earth shall be a concern to the angels of God in heaven. He also declared that His followers "shall be as the angels of God in heaven" (Mt. xxii, 30).

If the angels are concerned about the faithful on earth, how much more are they concerned who have passed through the ordeal of life in which the faithful on earth are still struggling. The saints are the friends of God and as such may help their brethren on earth. Jesus has said: "If any man minister to

Me, him will My Father honor" (Jn. xii, 26). The saints in heaven are they who on earth ministered to Christ.

Monarchs on earth honor those whom they desire to honor by granting their petitions for themselves and others. Hence St. John in his heavenly vision beheld

"An angel who came and stood before the altar, having a gold censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God" (Apoc. viii, 3).

These prayers of the saints in heaven are not for themselves, as they stand not in need of prayer, as they are confirmed in glory. Their prayers are for those members of the kingdom of Christ who are in need of help—whether it be those still struggling on earth, or those detained in that place of purification where those who are not spotless are made ready for that realm wherein nothing defiled can enter.

If the prayer of the just man avail much with God, how much more efficacious must be the prayer of the saints in heaven who have been crowned for their justice. If St. Paul could say to the faithful at Rome: "I beseech you therefore, brethren . . . that you help me in your prayers for me to God" (Rom. xv, 30), he could much more confidently ask the saints in heaven to pray for him. St. James says: "The continual prayer of a just man availeth much" (Jam. v, 16). The saints are the supremely just. Their prayers, accordingly, are most efficacious with God.

The saints intercede with God as His servants. But there is one in glory who intercedes with Him as His Mother. Mary is one of us. She was born of human parents as we were. She lived and struggled and died as the rest of us mortals. She is also the Mother of the Redeemer, who is in glory on the right hand of the eternal Father. As the Mother of Christ, her wishes must be to Him almost a command. As our heavenly Mother she is concerned with our needs. We have in her, consequently, a powerful friend with God.

Christ's own Church, in the Apostles' Creed declares that a bond of sympathy and helpfulness exists among the faithful militant on earth, the faithful suffering in purgatory and the faithful triumphant in heaven. We have seen that the Apostles besought the prayers of the faithful, and that the saints in heaven intercede for their brethren on earth.

Revelation also teaches that the saints and ourselves may also assist the souls in purgatory.

"It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins" (II Mac. xii, 46).

It were useless to pray for the faithful departed unless the Communion of Saints embraced the souls in purgatory. Christ, by His silence on this Jewish custom, approved of prayers for the dead. There is therefore a bond between us and these holy souls. This bond is the charity which inspires the followers of Christ to aid one another as the children of God. Those on earth can by their good deeds merit for themselves and others. Those in purgatory are

helpless for themselves, as they can no longer merit, but they can be helped by their brethren in heaven and on earth, and can pray for their brethren on earth.

Thus it is that the doctrine of the Communion of Saints—which Revelation teaches, and which Christ's own Church proclaims—is a most consoling as well as salutary dogma of divine faith. It is consoling, for it assures us that we can help our dear ones departed who are awaiting entrance to their Father's home; and it is salutary because it assures us of the interest in us of those who are friends of God, and who consequently can help us to fight the good fight which they have won, and for which they are eternally crowned.

It helps wonderfully in life's warfare to know that others like ourselves have been victorious, and that like them we shall be crowned if we persevere to the end. The consoling and salutary doctrine of the Communion of Saints has enabled many to triumph who otherwise would have succumbed to the assaults of the world, the flesh and the devil.

In the World War our troops at the front were encouraged to hardship, privation and the dangers of combat by the realization that they were being upheld by the prayers and sacrifices of those at home; and that, moreover, they themselves were fighting for the protection and welfare of their dear ones. So the followers of Christ are strengthened by the realization that the saints in heaven are interceding for them; and stimulated by the knowledge that by their own virtuous deeds they may help their dear ones beyond who are awaiting purifica-

tion for the blessed kingdom of God's loved ones.

The souls in purgatory are future saints. They are but waiting for the spotless garment with which all must be clothed who dwell in God's abode. It is a comfort to know that we on earth can hasten the entrance to glory of those holy souls. When they are numbered among the blessed whom God desires to honor, we are certain that they will not be unmindful of those who have helped them. The dogma of the Communion of Saints is a great incentive to virtue, inasmuch as it assures us that we are not fighting alone, but have the whole court of heaven as witness of our endeavors and as advocates of the victorious issue of our labors and struggles.

"The Angel Raphael said to Tobias: When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayers to the Lord. . . . And now the Lord hath sent me to heal thee" (Tob. xii, 12-14).

By this we see that the heavenly spirits not only behold the virtuous deeds of the faithful but moreover ardently sustain the faithful. The saints are as the angels of God, and are not less concerned about us than the other heavenly spirits.

The dogma of the Communion of Saints does not at all imply that we should overlook God and appeal to the saints rather than to their Lord. It is clearly understood that in honoring the saints by imploring their intercession we are honoring God from whom all good gifts flow.

The saints are they who have won the favor of God by their fidelity to Him in the day of trial.

In return for their loyalty and sacrifice God sees fit to bestow favors through them which otherwise might not be granted. We have evidence of this when God bade the wicked counselors of Job to go to Job and beg him to intercede for them.

"The Lord said to Eliphaz: My wrath is kindled against thee . . . go to my servant Job . . . and My servant Job shall pray for you: his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you. . . . The Lord also was turned at the penance of Job, when he prayed for his friends" (Job xlii, 7-10).

Scripture is replete with examples of God's granting mercy and benefits at the intercession of those who served Him faithfully. We have therefore the authority of God Himself for praying to the saints in heaven whom their Eternal King desires to honor.

Christ worked His first miracle at the request of Mary, when, at the marriage feast of Cana, He changed water into wine at her request, although His time for working miracles had not yet come (Jn. ii, 1-11). If the intercession of God's holy ones on earth are acceptable to Him, much more acceptable must be the intercession of those who are associated with Him in glory.

Tennyson, although not a Catholic, has beautifully expressed the doctrine of the Communion of Saints in the following lines:

"I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! But thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.

For what are men better than sheep and goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands in prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friends?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God." *

* *Morte d'Arthur*—Alfred Lord Tennyson.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONFESSION

THE Creed of Christ's own Church states: "I believe in . . . the forgiveness of sins." Christ said to His Apostles, when He gave them their commission to preach the Gospel: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (Jn. xx, 23). These were not idle words. Christ Himself forgave sin, as we know. His Church was established to continue His ministry. What that ministry was the Apostles had learned during the three years of companionship with Him in His public life. Hence it was that this Holy Spirit should recall to their minds all that He had taught them.

Moreover, during the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension, Christ instructed the Apostles with regard to the nature of the Church and the means to be employed in conducting their mission. This is evident from the Acts of the Apostles: "To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God" (Acts i, 3). *The kingdom of God* was His Church. This we know because frequently He had referred to His future Church as the kingdom of God. "Calling together the twelve Apostles, He gave them

power and authority . . . and He sent them to preach the kingdom of God. . . . And going out, they went about through the towns, preaching the Gospel" (Lk. ix, 1-6). Here, *the kingdom of God* and *the preaching of the Gospel* are synonymous.

The Church is the living voice of God. "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Lk. x, 16). The Church is God's representative to mankind, as is evident from Christ's own words: "He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them; and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (Jn. xx, 21-23).

No government ever conferred power on its ambassadors more explicitly than did Christ when He empowered His ministers to act as His representatives or ambassadors. An ambassador speaks with the authority of his government. A nation will uphold its accredited ambassador even if it be necessary to have recourse to arms.

Before Christ gave power to His Church He solemnly announced that "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth" (Mt. xxviii, 18). This prelude was intended, doubtless, to show that the power He was to convey on His representatives was not limited to this world. Addressing Peter, the head of the Church, Christ said: "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Mt. xvi, 19).

These solemn words certainly mean what they signify. Christ never spoke in vain.

The above words were addressed to Peter as chief of the Apostles. Lest it be thought that the power so conferred was to Peter only, our divine Lord on another occasion—speaking to all the Apostles on fraternal correction—said: “And if he will not hear them: tell the Church. And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican. Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven” (Mt. xviii, 17-18).

That was the most august commission and the greatest power ever conferred on mankind. It made the ministers of Christ’s Church truly His representatives on earth. Hence St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: “For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us” (II Cor. v, 20). And to show that the ministers of Christ’s Church were real ambassadors, he furthermore states: “All things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Christ; and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation” (II Cor. v, 18). Here the Apostle distinctly states that Christ’s mission of reconciling sinners to God was assigned to those who were called to the ministry.

Nothing in Scripture is clearer than the power of reconciliation which Christ conferred upon His Church. Words lose their meaning if He did not authorize her to forgive sin in His name. The Apostles themselves so understood the matter, as is evident. For sixteen centuries Christendom so under-

stood it, as is clear from history. If during all these centuries the Church were in error regarding her power of forgiveness, Christ's guarantee to her failed, which means that Christianity itself failed, for the Church has exercised the ministry of forgiving sin from the very day of Christ to the present day. If the Church were wrong all these centuries, Christ was a false prophet and His religion consequently a deception.

It may as well be said plainly that Christianity is wholly true or else the most colossal fraud ever imposed on mankind. If the Church of Christ ever taught error, she gives the lie to Christ. If Christ gave a guarantee which He could not fulfill, He was not God. Hence, it is as clear as day that if Christ is God error can no more attach itself to His Church than to Himself. This being definitely settled, therefore, we must be prepared to accept the Church's teaching on confession or reject Christ. Both stand or fall together.

When Christ empowered His Church to forgive sins, He did so by the following commission: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (Jn. xx, 23). This means that judgment is to be exercised in the matter of forgiveness. Judgment supposes knowledge of the sins in question. Hence confession is necessary for the administration of the Sacrament of Penance. Unless confession were made an essential part of the Sacrament of Penance by Christ Himself, it is doubtful if any human authority could have done so. It requires

divine authority to make man reveal to his fellow-man the hidden sins of his life.

It is sometimes objected to confession that it puts a man between the penitent and God. Those who so object declare that it is better to go direct to God; that an intermediary is a reflection on divine goodness. But suppose God has declared how He wants the sinner to approach Him! It is not for man to prescribe to God how He shall receive the penitent.

It is clear that such an objection shows complete misconception of confession. God employs a priest to baptize, but that does not mean that the priest confers grace or blots out sin; God could confer the grace and forgiveness of Baptism directly if He so ordained, but He has willed to do so by the agency of man. So with regard to the Eucharist. It is a priest who consecrates the Eucharist and offers the Holy Sacrifice, but it is by the power and ordination of God that he does so. It is the same with confession—the priest is only the instrument employed by God.

When a car is set into motion by means of a trolley-wire it is not the wire that supplies the motion but the power-house. The wire is useless unless the power is turned on, and there is no power unless the wire connects it with the car. There is such a thing as wireless transmission of power, and there is also such a thing as God's direct action on the soul in the forgiveness of sins; but the ordinary means appointed by God for forgiveness of sin is through confession to a duly ordained priest.

It is not our affair to question why God employs Sacraments, but it is for us to use them for our

souls' welfare, and to thank Him for establishing such an available means as confession to regain His favor if we have lost it by sin. Confession, moreover, brings man great comfort, peace and spiritual guidance and strength. Confession is one of the most helpful institutions of Christ for the salvation and sanctification of souls.

If confession be not possible on account of circumstances, the sinner may go direct to God, and will be pardoned—no matter how many or serious his sins—if he be truly penitent. In a storm at sea, or in danger of life by fire, collision or pestilence, etc., if there be no opportunity of going to confession, a true turning to God for forgiveness, will bring God's pardon into the soul of the most flagrant sinner. When confession is not possible, the penitent may go directly to God, and be assured that God is more eager to forgive than the sinner is to receive forgiveness, if the penitent have the right disposition. But always, in such cases, it is understood that the sinner is willing to do what God has commanded, and God has ordained that confession, when possible, is a necessary condition for pardon. Hence, if a person survive a serious danger, he is bound to comply with the ordinary means instituted by Christ for forgiveness of sin,—one of which is confession.

Having stated some of the conditions which Christ has ordained for the Sacrament of Penance, it may not be unprofitable to inquire into the reasons He may have had for requiring the confession of sins. Of course, the great and all-sufficient reason is His will and wisdom. It is for God to specify the terms

of reconciliation for those who have offended Him. Moreover, what His reasons were for instituting confession are known to Himself alone. However, knowing that God is Wisdom itself, we are certain that His ordinations are made with infinitely good reasons. This much premised, we may endeavor to learn what God's purpose was in making confession a necessary requirement, ordinarily, for the forgiveness of sin.

Sin is, in its last analysis, an act of pride. It is defiance of the Creator by the creature. It is answering the precept of God as given in the *Lord's Prayer*—"Thy will be done"—by saying to God by deed, if not by word: "*Not* Thy will, but mine, be done." Since sin is, therefore, an act of pride by which man refuses to submit to God, it seems only proper, that in order to obtain forgiveness, an act of humility should be required. And that is what confession is—an act of humility. By sin, man—in a certain sense—puts himself above God, refusing to take orders from Him; by confession the penitent lowers himself to his fellow-man, disclosing his weaknesses and transgressions to a weak, sinful creature like himself.

Another reason that may be assigned for confession is that the preparation for confession is a sort of spiritual stock-taking, showing how the soul stands in God's sight. Previous to confession there is the examination of conscience by which, as in a spiritual mirror, one sees the state of one's soul. This checking up of one's life is a marvelous help to right living.

Furthermore, the soul has its ills as well as the body, and in confession, the priest—who is the phy-

sician of the soul—is able to give expert advice on everything concerning conscience. The best of mankind may at times have spiritual maladies which they hesitate or refuse to disclose to any human being. But the priest in confession is under the Sacramental Seal, and the penitent knows he may speak to him as to God Himself. Non-Catholics realize this benefit of confession, and, not infrequently, in their distress of soul, go to a priest for comfort and direction. Without going further into the matter it must be evident to one who understands human nature that confession is a wise provision of God for man's spiritual welfare.

In confession, the priest is, as it were, a wire from heaven to earth. He is the means appointed by God to bring the creature in communication with the Creator, for the acknowledgment of sin, and for its forgiveness. In using a telephone the instrument is only the means of transmission. It is so with the priest in confession. Sins are confessed to God, but through the priest; and pardon is granted by God, but through the priest.

Confession, rightly practised, is one of the most efficacious means established by our Saviour for the salvation and sanctification of mankind. This becomes evident if we reflect that a good confession means sorrow for sin, and the purpose to avoid sin in the future. It also obliges the penitent to repair, as far as possible, any injustice done to others.

Moreover, the penitent who receives absolution has the certainty of God's forgiveness. Outside confession one may hope and pray for mercy without having the guarantee of pardon. But the penitent

who has received absolution in confession has the assurance of God Himself that his sins are blotted out, provided he be rightly disposed.

This assurance of forgiveness is a great incentive to right living. Many persons, discouraged by a sinful past, think it useless to try to change their ways. But with the sinful past obliterated—and with divine assurance that it is obliterated—the worst sinner can take heart, and start anew. A good confession has been the turn in the road for many a sinner. "They that are in health need not a physician," said Our Lord, "but they that are ill" (Mt. ix, 12). The confessor is the physician of the soul, and confession is an essential part of the remedy for soul ills prescribed by the Great Physician of mankind—Christ, Our Lord.

In conclusion, let me quote the following from the Rev. M. Sparrow, a Protestant:

"Let's search the Scriptures: look into the twentieth of St. John, verse 23. 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.' Here is plainly a power of remitting sins granted to the priest by Our Blessed Saviour. Nor can it be understood as remitting sins by preaching, as some expound it, nor by baptizing, as others guess, for both of these—preach and baptize—they could do long before; but this power of remitting they received not till now, that is, after Christ's resurrection." *

* Sparrow's *Rationale*.

CHAPTER XIX

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

THE Creed of Christ's own Church states: "I believe in . . . the resurrection of the body."

The resurrection of the body means more than future life. The life of the soul after death is future life. The soul as a spirit will live on, but such an existence would not constitute man. Man is a being constituted of body and soul. The body shares in the activities of the soul for good or evil. The resurrection of the body means that man, as man—both body and soul—will, after the general resurrection, live on forever, either with the glorified risen Christ in heaven or with fallen Lucifer in his abode of eternal despair.

No truth of Revelation is clearer or more emphatic than that of the resurrection of the body. In the Old Testament, Job says: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see God. Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom" (Job xix, 25-27). The angel that appeared in vision to Daniel, and foretold the fate of the people as it actually came to pass in the course of time, also said to him: "Many of those that sleep in the dust of

the earth, shall awake; some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always" (Dan. xii, 2).

In the New Testament we meet with constant reference to the resurrection of the body. "Jesus said to Martha: Thy brother shall rise again. Martha said to Him: I know that he shall rise again, in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her: I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live" (Jn. xi, 23-25). During His public life Jesus raised three persons from the dead. These three are recorded. There may have been many more. St. John says: "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this Book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you may have life in His name" (Jn. xx, 30-31).

The three resurrections recorded in the Gospel embrace three stages of death. (1) The daughter of Jairus, dead only a few hours; (2) the son of the widow of Naim had been dead several days, and was being carried out to burial; (3) Lazarus was dead and buried and corruption of the body had set in. The maiden may be said to have been snatched from the hands of death, as death had just seized her. The widow's son was taken from the jaws of death, since he was about to be interred. Lazarus was torn from the bowels of death, having been buried and reached the stage of corruption.

There was question not only of future life in each of these cases, but of the restoration of the dead body to a living activity and a normal vitality, after

these both had been lost. Consequently, when Jesus proclaimed the resurrection of the body, He was announcing something which was not only possible but which had been accomplished. Christ declared that: "The hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (Jn. v, 28-29).

Jesus foretold His own Resurrection definitely. It came to pass precisely as He had predicted. Therefore, since He has proclaimed that all the dead shall rise again, this prediction will likewise be fulfilled.

Over and over again Jesus declared the resurrection of the body. "Now this is the will of the Father who sent Me: that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again at the last day" (Jn. vi, 39). Christ was speaking here of the body, as is evident, since the soul never dies, and consequently could not be raised up. Unless the soul lives on, Jesus had not addressed the dead Lazarus as He did when He said: "Lazarus, come forth" (Jn. xi, 43). Nor would He have said to the widow of Naim's dead son's body: "Young man, I say to thee, arise" (Lk. vii, 14). Christ spoke to the living souls whose bodies were in the grip of death.

By raising these bodies to life, Jesus manifested His power over death and the grave. Hence, He proclaimed on another occasion: "They that shall be accounted worthy of that world, and of the resurrection from the dead . . . can die no more: for

they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Lk. xx, 35-36).

What Christ so frequently and plainly proclaimed concerning the resurrection of the body, the Apostles likewise made the principal theme of their discourses. Writing to the Thessalonians, St. Paul says: "We will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again; even so them who have slept through Jesus, God will bring with Him" (I Thess. iv, 12-13).

The Apostle here refers to the dead as those who are asleep, signifying that death shall have an awakening. Jesus used the same expression for death when He informed the Apostles that Lazarus was dead, saying: "Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him" (Jn. xi, 11).

In his epistle to the Romans, St. Paul declares: "If the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, shall quicken also your mortal bodies, because of His spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii, 11).

St. Paul, in his discourse to the Corinthians, linked the Resurrection of Christ with that of the faithful: "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again. And if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your Faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God . . . if the dead rise not again" (I Cor. xv, 13-15).

Addressing the same Corinthians, the Apostle goes on to say: "Why also are we in danger every hour? . . . If I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me, if the dead rise not again? . . . But some man will say: How do the dead rise again? or with what manner of body shall they come? Senseless man, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die first . . . so also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. . . . It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body. . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: *Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?*" (I Cor. xv, 30-55).

God, who made all things out of nothing, can surely clothe the spirit of man with its body, if He wills. We do not understand how the world was made by the mere command of the Creator. We do not understand how Providence feeds the whole world, year after year, from the soil of the earth and the elements. We do not understand how in the early summer nature springs to life after having been entombed in the ice and snow of winter. We do not understand how the bread we eat becomes our very bodies. We are a mystery to ourselves. Much more is God a mystery to us and His ways incomprehensible.

All the scientists in the world cannot make a blade of grass nor a flower of the field. Although we know that the rose and the lily and the daisy and all the

flowers are but combinations of four gases—carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen—nevertheless we cannot make the least flower of the field. The diamond is but crystallized carbon, and in a few moments may be reduced to charcoal in a chemical laboratory, but all the chemists in the world cannot restore the diamond.

The repulsive caterpillar which crawls the earth and feeds on weeds, buries itself in a tomb of its own making, and, after a time, bursts its sepulchre to emerge a winged creature of the air,—the beautiful butterfly which now scorns base food and feeds on fragrant flowers! So, the Apostle tells us, it will be with our body. "It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power. It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body" (I Cor. xv, 42-44).

With God it is not a question of possibility. Everything is possible to the Almighty. It is a question of *will* only. If God wills that those who dominate the body and its passions, in accordance with His holy law, should have that body glorified, as His own is glorified, it is certain that His will can accomplish its purpose. It is simply a question of fact. Has God proclaimed the resurrection of the body? We know that He has. We know, therefore, that our body will rise.

For us the main issue is *in what condition* our body will rise—whether a glorious body, unto life everlasting; or a dishonored body, unto everlasting shame. We all shall rise again, that is certain; but the manner of our resurrection will depend upon

the manner of our present life. Our resurrection will be what we ourselves make it. This it is that gives life its tremendous significance. Man being free to transgress shall receive eternal glory or eternal misery (Eccl. xxxi, 10). Our divine Lord declared: "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. vii, 21).

In doing the will of God, man is obliged, ordinarily, to subject the body and its evil inclinations to the law of the spirit. This is not always done without violence to our bodily comfort and craving. Even the great St. Paul experienced this warfare of the flesh against the spirit: "I find then a law, that when I have a will to do good, evil is present with me. For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man: but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind" (Rom. vii, 21-23).

Man has within himself elements which constitute his body a field of Christian warfare. We are either with Christ or against Christ, according as we master our bodily passions or yield to them. Since, therefore, the body plays such a vital part in man's victory unto eternal life, it is fitting that it should also share in the glory of everlasting blessedness. Christ's own glorious body is part of His eternal triumph as God-Man. He has decreed that His followers, also, should rise with glorious bodies to share forever with Him His victory over sin and death.

Whenever, therefore, we recite those words of the Apostles' Creed—"I believe in . . . the resurrection

of the body"—they should recall to our mind our glorious destiny as the children of God. Jesus proclaimed: "I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn. xiv, 2). He has prepared a place and a condition like unto His own, for all those who in this life acknowledge Him for Lord and live as He has commanded.

Where Christ is in glory—body and soul, humanity and divinity—there shall all those be, body and soul, who in the warfare of Christian life, fight the good fight and conquer for Christ. "To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne" (Apoc. iii, 21). Such a destiny makes the most ordinary life a great adventure. The glorious end of man makes the most drab existence worth while.

Life is drab at times. Many lives are drab from beginning to end. Even the most fortunate have dark days. We are not always young, nor healthy, nor free from forebodings. While we are young and strong and supplied with the needs and the luxuries of life, we may not feel the burden of existence. But the world generally is not so constituted. It is, moreover, only a question of time when we must make our exit from our earthly abode. Either by illness or accident we shall be summoned hence, and perhaps when we least expect.

God did not make this masterpiece of creation to be merely the victim of worldly vicissitudes. Man is made to the image and likeness of his Maker. Man aspires to a happiness which this world cannot give. It is only the Maker of man that can satisfy the heart of man. "O God, Thou hast made us for

Thyself, and our hearts shall never be at rest until they rest in Thee." Thus exclaimed Augustine, who sought to quench his thirst for peace at every worldly fountain, only to find that it left him thirsting still more. We shall seek lasting peace in vain until we find it in God.

The grave is not the goal but starting point of man's real existence. This present life is rather a living death than life, for each day brings us that much closer to the inevitable grave. But Christ proclaimed that He came to give life. He was not referring to this present life which His hearers already had, but to real life. "He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live" (Jn. xi, 25).

Calvary seemed the end of Christ's career. It was rather the beginning. The mangled body on the cross was the seed that dieth before springing unto glorified life. Easter followed Good Friday. The Resurrection was the sequel to the Crucifixion.

Christ rose from the dead not merely as an individual, but as Captain of a great host. As He died not for Himself, but for us; so He rose not merely for Himself, but as the Leader of all those who in sincerity follow Him. Christ's Resurrection is the pledge of ours. Death is not the grim conqueror, nor the final destiny of man. Christ by His Resurrection has triumphed over death and the grave.

St. Paul tells us that our body "is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power. It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body" (I Cor. xv, 42-44). No wonder that the Apostle then cried out:

"O Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?" (I Cor. xv, 55).

To the followers of Christ death indeed will come, as it will come to all; but for them, instead of the cold hand of despair, it will be the warm embrace of love. Where Christ dwells in glory there shall they also be who in this life have followed Him who is the Way, and the Truth and the Life.

CHAPTER XX

LIFE EVERLASTING

THE concluding article of the Creed of Christ's own Church, is: "I believe in . . . the life everlasting." *Life everlasting* means more than the resurrection of the body. The dead might rise again but not to live forever. The meaning of the Creed is that risen man shall live forever.

Christ did not come to give us temporal welfare but eternal. In point of fact, this is so much so that He declared: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Mt. xvi, 26). He also said: "He that shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it" (Mt. xvi, 25). The whole trend of Christ's teaching is that man should make every sacrifice for eternal life.

Christ Himself stated that the purpose of His coming was to give us life everlasting. On a certain occasion, He said: "I am come that they may have life" (Jn. x, 10). Now those to whom He thus spoke already had life—that is, this mortal life—otherwise He could not have addressed them. Hence He not only said "I am come that they may have life," but added, "and may have it more abundantly" (Jn. x, 10). When, therefore, He said He came to give them life, He was speaking of that life beyond which they did not as yet possess.

Again, He said: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Mt. xix, 17). Those to whom He spoke these words were living men and women. Yet He said to them: "If thou wilt *enter* into life." He spoke of the life beyond, and they so understood Him.

Almost the last words of Christ were a reference to everlasting life. To the condemned man on the cross at His right, He said: "This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise" (Lk. xxiii, 43). The dying Christ said this to the dying, but repentant, malefactor. Christ calls the life *paradise* which He promises to the repentant thief. It is, therefore, different from this life which is far from a paradise.

Indeed this life may be said to be a living death rather than life. We begin to die as soon as we are born. Our poet expresses this idea graphically when he says:

"Art is long, and time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave."

All during our life—from infancy to old age—it is a constant struggle against accident, disease and death.

But though life leads to death, it does not end with death. Again we quote Longfellow:

"Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
'Dust thou art, to dust returneth.'
Was not spoken of the soul."

Man is made to the image and likeness of the Creator. This likeness is in the soul, since God is a spirit. The soul is immortal and can never die: "And He said: Let us make man to our image and likeness. . . . And God created man to His own image. . . . And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. i, 26-27; ii, 7).

Of all visible creation, man alone received a spiritual nature. It is this part of him that we call the soul. It makes man the masterpiece of visible creation, and the monarch of the world. "And let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth" (Gen. i, 26). Man, by reason of his intellect and free will, dominates the rest of creation. Although the beasts are stronger than he is, he makes them do his work. He forces the elements to drive his ships and to carry his messages. He makes the earth give up her secrets and hand over to him her riches. It is the spirit in him that gives him this mastery over nature. His body, in many respects, is inferior to those of the animals. He has not their speed, endurance, nor power of vision; yet in all these things man surpasses the animal because of his intelligence.

Man, as the image of God, should, in a measure, manifest something of God's creative power. And he does. When a composer originates a melody; or the poet utters thoughts that are new; or the artist pictures scenes of his own visioning—what is it but creation of a certain kind! Man alone invents, man alone makes nature—both animate and inanimate—

do his bidding. In all this and in other ways man shows that he is truly what Scripture declares—the image of God.

As man in a way reflects the creative power of God, so does he reflect His immortality. God's immortality is essential to His nature. God is necessarily without beginning and without end, since He is infinite. Man's immortality is an endowment of the Creator. In creating man, God saw fit to make him immortal. The Creator having thus decreed, man is now destined to live forever. When the Creator breathed into the face of man, making him to be a living soul, He imparted to him something which was not bestowed on the rest of creation. By virtue of this gift of God, man will live as long as He who made him.

Life everlasting is not only a teaching of Revelation, it is also a consequence of man's spiritual nature. When God made the soul of man He gave to him immortality. For the soul, being a spiritual substance, is incapable of dissolution. The dissolution or destruction of a thing is caused by the separation or division of its component parts. But what is spiritual has no parts, and therefore cannot be divided nor separated.

It is because the soul is immortal that man has from the beginning experienced an instinctive sentiment for perpetual existence. The average man cannot conceive of a time when he will cease to be. Those people who declare that the grave ends all, but who nevertheless are so solicitous about posterity's judgment on them, are a living contradiction. For why should what-is-to-be-nothing care for pos-

terity's verdict? Man simply cannot get away from the idea of future life. This is why every nation and tribe has certain rites and ceremonies pertaining to the life beyond the grave. It is human nature asserting herself.

But whether or not man may of himself know that there is a future life, God has explicitly and frequently proclaimed it. Immediately before Christ performed His greatest miracle—the resurrection of Lazarus—He said to Martha, the sister of Lazarus: “I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live: and every one that liveth, and believeth in Me, shall not die for ever” (Jn. xi, 25-26).

As we have said, resurrection of the body is not the same as life everlasting. It would be possible for the soul to exist forever without the body. Christ proclaims more than the immortality of the soul. He declares the future union of body and soul, and, as a result, the everlasting life of man as man—both body and soul.

When Christ promised the institution of the Blessed Eucharist He said to the multitude that had just witnessed the multiplication of the loaves and fishes: “He that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life” (Jn. vi, 47). That this everlasting life was to be the whole man—body and soul—Christ Himself clearly states: “They that shall be accounted worthy of that world, and of the resurrection from the dead . . . are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Lk. xx, 35-36). The soul cannot have a resurrection, but only the body. The children of the resur-

rection are, therefore, those who—body and soul—forever dwell in the abode of the Blessed.

Not all who rise again rise to glory. There is a resurrection to eternal despair as well as to eternal life. This is what makes life beyond of such importance to us. If we were to live forever, and everlasting life were to be the same for all, we could take it as a matter of course. But Christ affirms that the life beyond will be what our life here makes it: "The hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (Jn. v. 28-29).

Our divine Lord, describing the judgment, says that all mankind will be assembled before Him—the good on His right hand, and the wicked on His left—"Then shall He say to them that shall be on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world. . . . Then He shall say to them that shall be on His left hand: Depart from Me, ye cursed! . . . and these shall go into everlasting punishment" (Mt. xxv, 34-46). Now we understand why God, who made man, proclaimed that the soul was of more value than the whole world. The world will pass away, but the soul will exist forever.

In this life man is free. He may use the free will that God gave him against its Giver, if he will. But the Creator will not be spurned by the creature. To whom much is given, of him much will be required. In giving man free will the Creator has given him very much. In giving him free will the Creator—by

the voice of conscience, and by His solemn declaration—directs man how to use it. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Mt. xix, 17). Man has a tendency to be his own lawmaker. He is inclined to be a law unto himself. But if we are to be with God hereafter we must belong to Him here. We show that we belong to Him by doing His will.

Hence, the dogma of life everlasting is a very important matter for us. Although it is the last article of the Creed of Christ's own Church, it gives significance to all that precedes it. For if there were no future life there would be no judgment hereafter. If there were no judgment it would not matter whether or not sins were forgiven. If there were no forgiveness of sin, Redemption would be meaningless. And so on.

Future life is the motive for and the basis of revealed religion. It makes a vast difference to man whether he is made for time or for eternity. If our career were to end with the grave we should live one way; but if it is to continue after the grave we must live quite another way. If death end all we need have regard to none but present consequences of conduct.

One reason why there is so much injustice, immorality and lawlessness in the world today is that so many persons regard life as something only here and now, and consequently endeavor to get everything possible out of life, regardless of right or wrong, except for appearances or for fear of detection and consequent punishment. The result is that respectability, rather than morality, influences many. Respectability may cloak the vilest and most

vicious life. One may have the manners of a prince and nevertheless be as depraved in secret as the most degraded criminal. One may have the reputation of honesty and yet be steeped in deception and injustice. Clever people, at least for a time, can cover their tracks so carefully that whilst indulging in immoral and dishonest practices they may appear to be paragons of virtue and justice.

But if we believe that the grave does not end all, but that it is only the door to eternity, and that everlasting happiness or everlasting misery depends upon the judgment that shall be passed on our life, it is quite another matter. Life, to those who believe in a life beyond, becomes charged with responsibility. Our conduct will depend not on the opinion of the world, nor upon the impression we make upon others, but upon its conformity to the law of God as known by conscience and the Commandments of God.

What fools the martyrs were to sacrifice their lives in torment if there be no future life! What foolishness for Sir Thomas More to place his head on the block to have it severed from his body by the axe, rather than go against his conscience by agreeing with his royal master! Henry VIII promised (the now Blessed) Thomas More the highest dignities and emoluments of the realm if he would uphold the royal divorce. But rather than do wrong More forfeited his life by a most painful and shameful death.

And so it has been with legions of men and women, who, rather than be rich and honored by deviating from the path of righteousness, have chosen to remain poor and unknown. But they were

neither poor nor unknown in the eyes of Heaven. When their period of probation was over they heard from Christ those wondrous words of welcome—"Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you" (Mt. xxv, 34).

So it makes a vast difference in our lives whether we are made for time or for eternity. If we persuade ourselves that our career ends here, we shall have an eye on the judgment of the world only, which can be so easily mistaken and deceived. But if we realize that after this life there is everlasting life, and that our happiness or misery forever will depend upon God's judgment of our present life, we have the most effective motive known to mankind for living uprightly. In proportion as the individual and society are influenced by the teaching of Christ on life everlasting, will the individual and society be virtuous and happy. There can be no real happiness by living according to false standards.

No matter what riches we may have, or what means of enjoyment may be ours, unless we are living uprightly we shall not know happiness. There is no happiness without peace, and peace never abides with unrighteousness. The most miserable people in the world are they who are a law unto themselves, who indulge every desire regardless of right or wrong. The world is filled with human wrecks who have ignored God's way for their own.

On the other hand, whether they be rich or poor, learned or simple, those who seek first the kingdom of God and its justice, find a contentment in life which more than recompenses for the sacrifices made for virtue's sake. The realization which comes to us

when we know that we are doing what God wants us to do, and that consequently we have His approbation and friendship, gives us courage in difficulties, strength in trials and peace amidst the disquietudes and vicissitudes of life.

Unless what Christ taught concerning everlasting life be true, He Himself and the religion He established are but a deception. But being true, both Christ and His religion are the standard of right in this life and the pledge of eternal felicity in the life beyond. Hence the Apostle, writing to the Corinthians, speaks as follows: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again. And if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your Faith is also vain. . . . If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep" (I Cor. xv, 13-20).

Christ is the First-Fruits of the Harvest of Eternity. We may be of that harvest if we live by Him and for Him. Christ became man in order that man might, in a certain sense, become divine. We may become like unto God hereafter, if we fashion our lives here after the Divine Model. "To as many as receive Him, He gives them the power to become the sons of God!" (Jn. i, 12).

CHAPTER XXI

GOD AND THE WORLD

IT is not uncommon at present for the older generation to condemn the younger for the prevailing juvenile license. But does the fault rest with the younger generation? Is not the younger generation what the older has made it? The youth of today are the crop sowed by the youth of yesterday—the present older generation. For the past forty or fifty years the older generation has been teaching the younger that man is but a high-class animal; that the God of Revelation is a myth; and that man is not master of his own actions.

Of course, most of this was academic. It was the prevailing teaching in our colleges and the burden of our literature. But ideas do not remain in the classroom nor in a book. What was academic in the older generation has been translated into conduct by the younger, with the result which alarms us today.

Ideas are seeds. Dogmas develop into deeds. If a man is persuaded that he is only an animal, albeit a high-grade animal, he will eventually descend to the level of the animal. Hence, the prevalence of sexual excesses at present. If a man is persuaded that Revelation is a myth, he will cast authoritative religion aside and become a law to himself. Hence the dreadful plague of crime which has swept over the

world of late. If man is taught that he is not master of his passions but their plaything, he will give way to them. Hence the result which we so much deplore—vice staring us in the face at every turn.

What is the remedy for this condition of affairs? It is respect for God and His law. But God has been ruled out of His world by the so-called philosophers and scientists of the day! They say that the God of Revelation is inconsistent with the facts of life. Because they cannot understand God and His ways they banish Him from His own creation. Man does not understand himself, much less may he understand God.

Man, at times, manifests indignation at what he considers the injustice of life. He finds it hard to see wisdom in the governance of the world, when—as so often happens—might prevails instead of right; when virtue suffers and vice prospers; when poverty, illness, accident and disaster combine to afflict mankind. The infinite power and wisdom which are displayed in the creation of the universe seem to be absent in its governance—at least with regard to man. Yet it is a far less thing to govern the world than to create it. We cannot imagine that the Creator who made the world has renounced control of it.

If, therefore, certain things appear to us to be inconsistent with wise governance, it must be because we are not in a position to see God's plan and purpose. A soldier in the ranks may at times criticize the orders of his commander-in-chief, because as a common soldier he does not know his general's mind. Ordinarily a soldier trusts his general, knowing that his high position is proof that he is qualified to com-

mand. We, too, must trust God, knowing that the same power and wisdom which made the world also govern it.

We know God is good because He gave us our mothers. We know He is just, because our sense of justice came from Him. If, therefore, life presents problems which seem to challenge goodness or justice, it is not because God is not good or just, but because our vision is limited. Could we see the end as does the Creator and Ruler of the world, we should discern a wise Providence over all the affairs of mankind.

In the Gospel, Christ gives us the key to the problem of life when He tells us that He has His own time and way of justifying His dealings with the world:

"Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?"

"And which of you by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?"

"And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these.

"And if the grass of the field, which is today, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith?" (Mt. vi, 26-30).

Life is probation, and this world is not the end, but the beginning of man's career. It is the first stage of man's existence and on it depends the eternal hereafter. Life, regarded in any other light is not only a problem but a contradiction.

Apart from Revelation, we may know that an all-powerful and all-wise Providence governs the world. *Providence* means a looking ahead, an adjustment of means to an end, an adaptation of part to part and of parts to the whole. The physical world displays a most marvelous adjustment and adaptation. In the firmament the immensity and number and regularity of the heavenly bodies made Newton declare that the mathematics of the firmament proclaimed an intelligent Designer.

Design and power are shown not only in immensity, but also, and even more, in the tiniest things. Until recently science affirmed that an atom was the smallest constituent of matter. More recent scientific discovery shows that in an atom—which is an element so small as to be humanly imperceptible—in an atom there are millions of tiny forces, called electrons, gyrating under laws as wonderful as those which govern the firmament. The tiniest particle of matter, as well as the vast firmament, proclaims an intelligent Creator.

All material creation is under admirable and fixed laws. From the sun in the heavens to the dewdrop that is dissolved by its rays, all nature is under law. Now a law supposes a lawgiver. Nothing material can limit and bind itself as all nature is limited and bound. The universe is a mighty force, yet it is incapable of deviating a particle from the course marked out for it by the Creator.

The vegetable and animal world are also governed by the will of the Creator. Instinct in animals directs them as surely as the laws of the firmament direct the heavenly bodies.

Not only are the various elements of the universe governed by laws, but everything in the entire universe is wonderfully adjusted to everything else, causing that marvelous order and harmony which characterize visible creation.

To some persons it may seem that such things as floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, etc., are inconsistent with a good and wise Providence. However, on reflection it will be seen that all the disturbances of nature which we call calamities are the result of an orderly process of natural law. A cyclone or a volcanic eruption is the resultant of certain physical forces which are proceeding orderly. What constitutes them a calamity is not their occurrence, but man's incidental presence and consequent injury or loss.

Some of the sublimest natural scenery is due to past upheavals of the earth's surface or to the channels dug into mountains by rushing waters. Yosemite Valley, the Grand Cañon of Arizona, Yellowstone Park, the Canadian Rockies are all the result of terrific natural forces acting under nature's fixed laws. A storm at sea is a majestic sight, if one can view it from a safe position. But it is a dreadful calamity to those on board a vessel which may be shipwrecked by its violence. The catastrophe is not in the storm, but in the presence in it of a vessel laden with human beings.

The so-called catastrophes of nature are as truly the result of nature's fixed laws as the sun's rising and setting. Why God permits human beings to be the victims of these cataclysms is something which concerns His dealings with man, and which in His

own time and way He will justify. Of one thing we may be sure—that He who gave us our reason and our sense of justice and mercy will not Himself be found lacking in those qualities.

Again let it be said that the Creator does not ask us to explain His ways, but to do His will. When Christ was on earth He did not explain the mysteries of religion, but proclaimed them. He gave His divine credentials and then demanded to be heard as God.

Now what is the significance of all this? It proclaims that power and wisdom rule the material world. The Master who imposes His will so admirably and effectively on all creation must indeed be powerful and wise.

Why, then, if God is so powerful and wise, does He permit so many calamities to befall mankind? A little reflection on the nature of man will enable us to understand, somewhat, God's dealings with him.

Of all visible creation man alone will outlast the material universe. Man is made to the image and likeness of God. This resemblance to God is in man's soul, which is immortal and free. Man alone, of all visible creation, is immortal; man alone is free. God having made man immortal, he will live as long as God Himself. God having made man free, there is no power in the world that can force the will of man. God Himself will not force the free will of man, because to do so would be to destroy it. All creation except man serves God necessarily. Man alone may serve God or refuse to serve Him. God obliges all material creation to serve Him in accordance with nature's determined laws. Man—being free—must

serve God of his own accord or not at all. God does not force man to serve Him; but He does, nevertheless, want man to do His will as the rest of creation does it. But He wants man to do His will freely—that is, according to human nature. Hence God declares His will to man but without forcing him—like the rest of creation—to do it.

Conscience is the voice of the Creator directing His free creature—man. Man may disregard conscience and defy the Creator, but at his own peril. God gave man free will, not that he should be irresponsible or independent of the Creator, but that he might have the privilege and merit of serving Him voluntarily. Man—being free—has the power of choice. He may do God's will or he may ignore it. God does not force man to do His will as He does force the rest of nature, but He makes His will known to man. This He does by conscience, which, as said before, is the voice of the Creator declaring His will to His rational creatures.

God has more clearly and definitely made known his will to man by the Ten Commandments, and by His Church.

Having declared His will, God gives man this life as a period of probation. Those who do His will shall be acknowledged by Him as His own, hereafter. They who are God's subjects in this life will be His children in life everlasting.

Life is probation. It is a time given to man in order to show whether or not he acknowledges God as King. If God is Our Lord and Master on earth, He will be Our Father in heaven. Hence Christ, in the *Lord's Prayer*, bids us say to our heavenly

Father: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt. vi, 10). By voluntarily doing God's will we proclaim ourselves His subjects on earth, and He will proclaim us His children in heaven.

Life, therefore, being probation, God permits the various vicissitudes and trials of life in order that we may show our fidelity to Him. Fidelity is not proven by receiving favors and protection, but under difficulties and hardships. If God's service required neither sacrifice nor patience nor trust, everybody would serve Him. But God's test of service is doing His will, and that not only under agreeable conditions, but under all circumstances. Hence God permits the calamities and vicissitudes of life in order to prove the loyalty of His subjects. The test of loyalty is not on parade, but on the battlefield. The observance of God's law is, therefore, the test of fidelity to God; and on our fidelity to Him here will depend our life with Him hereafter.

It is because God and His law are ignored that the flagrant immorality of the present day abounds. We are free. God has made us so. We are free even to defy God. But if we defy Him here, we shall have no part with Him hereafter. But if we use our free will to serve Him here, we shall reign with Him hereafter. "To as many as receive Him, He gives them the power to become the sons of God" (Jn. i, 12). The remedy for the prevailing license is a return to God. Our forefathers revered God and lived uprightly and happily. They were as wise as we. Truth has not waited for the twentieth century.

Christ is God. His doctrine of life is right and it leads to life everlasting. What Christ's teaching was

no one knew so well as the Apostles. If they did not know Christ's teaching no one did. The Apostles, therefore, knowing the mind of Christ and His teaching embodied its essentials in the Apostles' Creed.

Christ's own Church is that Church which teaches precisely what the Apostles' Creed proclaims. There is but one Church in the world which upholds that Creed in its entirety. One article of that Creed is, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." To believe in that Church means to accept her teaching as that of Christ, and to live accordingly.

Christ is the Light of the world (Jn. viii, 12). He is the Way, and the Truth and the Life (Jn. xiv, 6). If we live by Him here we shall share His divine blessedness hereafter. The real purpose of our life here below is to attain everlasting life with God. The most fortunate life is a failure if it leads not to eternal welfare. The most miserable life is a success if it is crowned with immortal glory in that kingdom of everlasting happiness which God has prepared for them that love Him.

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SCOTT Martin J SJ

AUTHOR
Christ's Own Church

TITLE

DATE
LOANED

BORROWER'S NAME

ROOM
NUMBER

4025

